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# MINUTES

OF THE

# CONVENTION OF DELEGATES

FROM THE

## SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA,

AND FROM

## THE ASSOCIATIONS OF CONNECTICUT;

HELD ANNUALLY

FROM 1766 TO 1775, INCLUSIVE.

HARTFORD:
PRINTED BY E. GLEASON.
1843.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1843, by David D. Field, in the Office of the Clerk of the District Court of Connecticut.

TO THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION IN SESSION AT WESTBROOK:

The Committee of the General Association appointed in 1842, to procure "the Minutes of the doings of the Convention, held for several successive years previously to the Revolutionary War, by Delegates from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and from the Associations of Connecticut," beg leave to report, that they have attended to the duties of their appointment, and have all the Minutes in readiness for transmission to the Register of the General Association, as directed.

The Minutes have been procured partly in Connecticut, and partly in Philadelphia, from the office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The Convention, as appears from these documents, was held annually, alternately within the bounds of the Synod and of the Associations, from 1766 to 1775 inclusive, and was then interrupted by the occurrence of the Revolution, the troubles of which rendered it impracticable for the Delegates to assemble.

The objects aimed at by the Synod and the Associations were, the promotion of Christian friendship between the members of their respective bodies, the spread of the Gospel, the preservation of the religious liberties of their churches, &c. The first and second Conventions were occupied mainly in forming and completing their plan of union and effort, and the subsequent Conventions in prosecuting measures for preserving the liberties of their churches, threatened at the time by the attempts made by the friends of Episcopacy in the Colonies and in Great Britain, for the establishment of Diocesan Bishops in America. To Bishops merely to superintend the concerns of Episcopal churches they did not object, if they might be duly restrained from going farther: but were apprehensive, should Bishops be appointed, that they would come clothed with all the powers of Diocesans in the mother country, or that they would acquire these powers, and exercise them in violation of the meaning and spirit of the Charters of the Colonies, and greatly to the injury of other denominations of Christians. To prevent their establishment, the Convention entered into an interesting correspondence with the Committee of Dissenters in England, and into arrangements for collecting the Charters, laws, and customs of the North American Colonies, so far as they respected religious liberty, for ascertaining the numbers of Non-Episcopalians in the Colonies, and their great superiority in this respect to the Episcopalians, together with an account of the existing Colleges and seminaries of learning.

Some of the letters between the Convention and the Committee of Dissenters in England appear in the Minutes, and evince that our fathers were alive to the cause of religious freedom. As a specimen of the extracts made from the Charters and Laws of the Colonies, and of the enumeration and classification of the

inhabitants, the Committee have copied the extracts made by the Rev. Elizur Goodrich, D. D., of Durham, from the Charter and Laws of the Colony of Connecticut; also, the collection by him of the number of the Non-Episcopalians and Episcopalians in Connecticut, which papers came providentially into their hands. Some gentlemen appointed by the Convention to make extracts did not fulfil their appointments, or fulfil them entirely, so far as is known, and the papers of some who did, it may be impossible at this period to find.

Your Committee deem the Minutes well worthy of perusal, and believe that not a few would be gratified to see portions of them in print.

All which is respectfully submitted,

DAVID D. FIELD,
STEPHEN DODD,
ELEAZAR T. FITCH, } *Committee.*

Connecticut, June, 1843.

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The preceding Report being presented to the General Association at Westbrook, was accepted, and referred with the accompanying documents, to a Committee consisting of Messrs. G. Hayes, Z. Swift, and A. B. Collins.

This Committee "made a report which was accepted;" and then "the documents were referred to the original Committee for publication, without expense to the" Association, accompanied by the following vote:

"*Voted*, That the profits of this publication be given to the members of the Committee.

"Attest, LEVERETT GRIGGS, *Scribe.*"

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N. B. Subsequently to the meeting of the Association the publication was entrusted entirely to the Chairman.

# PRELIMINARIES

TO THE

# CONVENTION OF DELEGATES

FROM THE SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA, AND FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS OF CONNECTICUT.

At a General Association of the Ministers in the Colony of Connecticut, at Guilford, the third Tuesday of June, 1766, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Ruggles, a motion was made to the Association by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, contained in a minute from the Synod Book, and a letter, which are as follows:

THE MINUTE.

"A minute from the Synod Book of New York and Philadelphia, of May 29th, P. M. Anno Salutis 1766, viz.:

"An overture was made by some members that we ought to endeavor to obtain some correspondence between this Synod and the Consociated churches of our brethren in Connecticut. A draught of a letter from this Synod to them was brought in, read, and approved. The Rev. Mr. Elihu Spencer, Moderator; the Rev. Mr. John Ewing and Mr. Patrick Alison, are desired to present this letter, and confer with our brethren upon this affair; and provided it shall seem meet to our Rev. Brethren to attend to this our proposal so far as to appoint commissioners from their body to meet with commissioners from ours, we appoint the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison, the Rev. Mr. John Rodgers, Timothy Jones, William Tennent, Sen'r., Elisha Kent, John Smith, John Blair, and Samuel Buel to meet with them at such time and place as the Rev. Brethren of Connecticut shall agree. The Rev. Mr. John Rodgers is appointed to give the Committee notice of what the associated brethren will do relative to this matter.

"A true copy, MATTHEW WILSON, Synod Clerk."

THE LETTER.

"Rev. and Dear Brethren,

"The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, at their annual meeting in May, 1766, have, among many other expedients to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, concluded upon the most mature deliberation, that a general meeting of delegates both from your Churches and our Presbyteries would answer this important purpose. Our earnest desire to accomplish so good an end has engaged us to embrace this opportunity of your next General Association to propose the matter to your serious deliberation, and to invite you to a general consultation about such things as may have a hopeful tendency to promote and defend the common cause of religion against the attacks of its various enemies; as we are all brethren, embarked in the same interest, perfectly agreed in doctrine and worship, substantially pursuing the same method of discipline and church government, and we trust all animated with the same laudable zeal to advance the kingdom of our common Lord, we cannot but hope for your ready concurrence with our invitation. Your good sense and general acquaintance with human nature, must necessarily lead you to see that a more intimate acquaintance with each others' views and designs, will enable us with greater harmony and consistence, and of consequence with greater success to support the common cause, in which we are all equally engaged. A general agreement in any measures that may be adapted to preserve our religious liberties against all encroachments, and to bless the benighted heathen on our borders with the glorious light of the Gospel, must promise desirable success. From the best information we can obtain about the constitution of your churches, we are persuaded that our proposal is not impracticable, and it will give us sensible pleasure to find that your extensive charity and readiness to promote the kingdom of Christ have induced you to concert such measures as will be best adapted to accomplish so important an end. We have appointed the Rev. Mr. Elihu Spencer, Mr. John Ewing, and Mr. Patrick Alison to

wait upon you at your next General Association, to deliver you our letter, and to converse with you at large on the subject of this proposal.

"Signed by order of Synod,

"By ELIHU SPENCER, Moderator."

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The Reply of the General Association was as follows: (see the Records of the Association for June, 1766.)

"Whereas a proposal has been made to this General Association by the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, representing that they are strictly united with us in doctrine and worship, as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and that the great and general interests of the Redeemer's kingdom would be happily promoted, the common cause of religion and virtue strengthened and defended, whilst mutual benevolence and brotherly love would be cultivated, by a general union, agreement, and correspondence with us, so far, and in such manner as is consistent and in no degree interfering with their and our respective internal state and order of government and discipline; and that it will give them great satisfaction to meet a number of our ministers at a suitable time and place, to converse with them upon a plan and articles of such desired union. We, therefore, having maturely considered their proposal, are unanimously agreed to use our influence to promote a compliance with it through this Colony, and we do in order thereto, advise the several Associations to appoint one or more of their body to meet commissioners from the Synod before mentioned, at New York, the first Wednesday in November next, to converse with them upon a plan and articles of such desired union, to be laid before the several Associations for their concurrence, and to be prepared for the consideration of the next General Association, and then to be completed.

"Voted in the affirmative."

The foregoing reply was enclosed in a letter from the Rev. Thomas Ruggles, Moderator of the General Association, and sent to the Rev. Mr. Rodgers, of New York.

"GUILFORD, June 17, 1766.

"With gratitude we have received the friendly proposal from your Rev. Synod relative to a general union, and our ready compliance with it comes enclosed; and we shall rejoice if the design may be happily carried into execution, and answer the good and valuable ends in view. And may the glorious and blessed time approach when love and union may prevail among all denominations of Christians through the world. We are, Rev. Sir, your affectionate brethren.

"Signed by order of the Association,

"THOMAS RUGGLES, Moderator."

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At an adjourned session of the General Association at the Chapel Hall, in New Haven, Sept. 11, 1766, the following order was taken:

"This Association met according to adjournment, and upon the unanimous motion and desire of the large Convention of ministers present on occasion of the commencement, the Moderator of this Association is requested by writing, to desire the Rev. Mr. Rodgers, that the intended interview of delegates from the Rev. Synod of New York, &c., and the several Associations of this Colony may be at Jamaica, on Long Island, and not at New York as was at first proposed, where it could not be attended without danger of the small pox.

"Voted in the affirmative.

"Recorded by EDWARD EELLS, Scribe."

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The contemplated meeting was finally appointed to be at Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

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## CONVENTION AT ELIZABETHTOWN,

### FOR FORMING A PLAN OF UNION.

ELIZABETHTOWN, New Jersey, Nov. 5, 1766.

The Convention of the Rev. the Delegates from the several Associations of Connecticut, and the Rev. Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to agreement.

Present from Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Noah Wells, Samuel Newel, James Sproat, Elizur Goodrich, Benjamin Boardman, and William Tennent, Jun.

Members of the Synod, Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, Sen., Dr. Francis Alison, John Blair, Timothy Jones, John Brainerd, Samuel Buel, Azariah Horton, Charles Beaty, William Mills, Alexander Mc Whorter, Benjamin Hait, Jonathan Elmer, Israel Reed, John Guild, Benjamin Woodruff, Azel Roe, Patrick Alison, Jedediah Chapman, Joseph Treat, and John Rodgers.

Mr. Wells opened the Convention with a sermon from Rom. iii. 31, after which Mr. Wells was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Rodgers, Scribe.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

6th day: 9 o'clock, A. M. Post preces sederunt qui supra.

Ordered that the minutes of the last sederunt be read. Present also this day from Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Bellamy, Robert Ross, and Nathaniel Taylor; and of the Synod, the Rev. Mr. Enoch Green.

The minutes of the Synod respecting this Convention, and their letter to the associated brethren of Connecticut inviting them thereto, were read: as also the commission of the several brethren from that Colony, given them by their respective Associations.

The design of this Convention was then opened, and two papers on the subject were read. Agreed that they be taken into consideration, which was accordingly done, and after some consideration on their several articles, adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M. Post preces sederunt qui supra. Ordered that the minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Mr. John Carmichael, a member of Synod, is also present. The General Convention proceeded to consider the articles of the papers read the last sederunt, and the following general articles were agreed to, to be laid before our respective constituents, viz.:

## A PLAN OF UNION,

Drawn up by the Delegates from the Associated Pastors of the Colony of Connecticut, and the Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, convened at Elizabethtown, Nov. 5, 1766.

Article I. That a General Convention be formed of the Pastors of the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Churches in North America, consisting of Delegates, chosen by each of these respective bodies, to be held annually, or as often as may be thought necessary, and that the first Convention be held at New Haven the next day after their public commencement, which will be the 10th day of Sept. 1767.

Article II. That this General Convention shall not be invested with, nor shall it any time hereafter assume any power, dominion, jurisdiction, or authority over the Churches or Pastors, or over any other Church or Pastor.* And it is particularly agreed that the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Churches shall subsist entire and independent of each other, notwithstanding this union, retaining their particular usages and forms of government; nor shall any attempts be made, nor any authority directly or indirectly used by this General Convention to change or assimilate the same.

Article III. That the general design of this Convention be to gain information of the public state of this united cause and interest; to collect accounts relative thereto; to unite our endeavors and counsels for spreading the Gospel, and defending the religious liberties of our Churches; to diffuse union and harmony, and to keep up a correspondence throughout this united body, and with our friends abroad, to recommend, cultivate, and preserve loyalty and allegiance to the King's Majesty, and also to address the King, or the King's Ministers from time to time with assurances of the unshaken loyalty of the pastors comprehended in this union and the churches under their care, and to vindicate them if unjustly aspersed.

Article IV. That summary accounts of all the informations and transactions of this General Convention, be from time to time, duly transmitted to all the Associations, Presbyteries and other bodies, that shall accede to, or be included in this Union.

* For an addition to this article here, see p. 19.

It is also agreed that letters be wrote to the Rev. the ministers of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island governments, informing them what we have done at this General Convention, and inviting them in the warmest manner to meet us by proper delegates at New Haven on the day agreed on: as also that letters of the same nature or tenor be wrote to the Rev. brethren of the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania;—and Mr. Bellamy, Mr. Beaty, and Mr. Mc Whorter are desired to prepare draughts of said letters, to be brought in to-morrow morning.

Inasmuch as there are three Associations in Connecticut who are not represented in this General Convention, Mr. Sproat is desired to communicate a copy of this Plan to the Moderator of the two Associations in New London county, and Mr. Newel is desired to communicate one to the Moderator of the Association of Windham.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

7th day: 9 o'clock, A. M. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the minutes of the last sederunt be read. The Committee appointed to draw up a copy of a letter to the Brethren of the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island governments and the Dutch Churches, brought it in, which was read, approved, and is as follows:

To the Reverend, the, &c.

The Rev. Delegates from the Associated Pastors in Connecticut, and the Rev. the Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, convened at Elizabethtown, Nov. 5, 1766—

Rev. Brethren,—The Synod of New York and Philadelphia at their last session in May, taking into serious consideration the many valuable purposes, both for promoting the kingdom of Christ, and preserving our religious liberty that might be answered by a general union of the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Ministers in these Colonies of North America, proposed their thoughts to the Rev. Associated Pastors of Connecticut, who appointed delegates from each of their Associations to

meet with a Committee of said Synod, and concert some plan wherein they might unite, and then lay said plan before their respective constituents, who met accordingly and drew up such a plan of union, as appeared to them expedient, which, if approved by their constituents will be confirmed at our first General Convention, which is to be the 10th of Sept. 1767, at New Haven. And as we greatly desire that the union should extend through all the Colonies, we embrace this first opportunity to inform our brethren of it, in the other Provinces, that if agreeable to them, they may send delegates to this General Convention, to unite in this important design, and assist in finishing and completing the Plan, of which we enclose you a copy, that you may have time to deliberate upon it, and if you shall think proper to unite with us, may have opportunity to make such emendations as you shall judge expedient.

Your presence, by such gentlemen as you shall appoint from your Rev. body, in such way and manner as to you shall appear most convenient, will be very acceptable to your brethren, in our common Lord.

Per order of this Convention,

Noah Wells, Chairman.

It is agreed that these letters be signed by the Chairman, in the name of the present Convention.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M. Post preces sederunt qui supra. Ordered that the minutes of the last sederunt be read.

The letters to the several brethren to the eastward were properly signed, and sent with the plans enclosed. The Scribe is desired to send proper copies of this letter to the Pastors of the Dutch Reformed Churches, together with a plan of the proposed union. Concluded with prayer.

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The above is a faithful account of the doings of the General Association of Connecticut, and the Convention at Elizabethtown, and presented to the Association of New Haven County, by Elizur Goodrich.

[The following is annexed to the foregoing Minutes, in the hands of the Register of New Haven East Association, and is here inserted.]

Suppose a gentleman in the Colonies should write to his correspondent in London, as follows :

" Sir,—We understand sundry petitions have been sent home by some of the Episcopal Clergy in these Colonies in order to obtain the appointment of a Bishop here ; and that it is a determined point on your side of the water to embrace the first favorable opportunity for that purpose. This affair we must confess gives us much anxiety, not that we are of intolerant principles ; nor do we envy the Episcopal Churches the privileges of a bishop for the purposes of ordination, confirmation, and inspecting the morals of their Clergy, provided they have no kind of superiority over, nor power any way to affect the civil or religious interests of other denominations. Let this be but settled by an act of Parliament, and such bishops divested of the powers annexed to that office by the common law of England, and then we shall be more easy. Without this the introduction of a Diocesan into the Colonies, would throw us into the utmost confusion and distraction. For though it is alleged that no other than the above hinted moderate Episcopacy is desired or designed ; yet should it not be fixed by Parliamentary Authority, we have no security that matters will be carried no farther ; yea, from the restless spirit, which some here have discovered, we have reason to apprehend that there is more in view. Our forefathers, and even some of ourselves have seen and felt the tyranny of Bishops' Courts. Many of the first inhabitants of these Colonies were obliged to seek an asylum among savages in this wilderness, in order to escape the ecclesiastical tyranny of Arch-Bishop Laud, and others of his stamp. Such tyranny, if now exercised in America, would either drive us to seek new habitations among the heathen, where England could not claim a jurisdiction, or excite riots, rebellion, and wild disorder. We dread the consequences as oft as we think of this danger. Gentlemen acquainted with the law inform us, that a Bishop is a public minister of state, known in the common law of England, and invested with a power of erecting courts to take cognizance of all affairs testamentary and matrimonial, and to enquire into and punish for all offences of scandal. Might he not plead, as well as any man, that the common law of England is his birth-right, and that the laws in force before the settling of the Colonies, were brought hither, and took place with the first settlers. What is to hinder him to claim all the powers exercised by Arch-Bishop Laud, and his Ecclesiastical Courts? All acts made in England since that time to lessen the power of Bishops and their Courts, can be of no service to us ; for it is not mentioned in any of them, that they are extended to the Colonies, and the reason is plain ; no such exorbitant powers were claimed or exercised among us. Now can any thing else than the most grievous convulsion in the Colonies, be expected from such a revolution? Will it all go down with us to have the whole course of business turned into a new channel ? Would it be yielded that the Register's office, the care of orphans, &c. should be transferred from the present officers, to such as a Bishop might appoint ? Would not the Colonies suffer the last extremities before they would

submit to have the legality of marriages and matters respecting divorce tried in an Ecclesiastical Court. It is not easy to conceive what endless prosecutions, under the notion of scandal may be multiplied. A covetous, a tyrannical and domineering Prelate, or his Chancellor, would always have it in their power to harass our country, and make our lives bitter by fines, imprisonments, and lawless severity. Will the numerous colonies who came hither for the sake of freedom from ecclesiastical oppression, and by whose toil a great increase of dominion and commerce hath arisen to the mother country, bear to find themselves divested of the equality and liberty they have so long enjoyed, and brought under the power of a particular denomination? And see them monopolize all important places of trust in order to secure that power? That the Episcopal Churches should enjoy all the privileges of their own discipline and government is a matter we have nothing to object against: but let Bishops be by law confined to the care of the people and clergy of their own Church, and stript of all their formidable power over other denominations, and let us be secured against the burden of their support; but without this we shall look upon ourselves reduced to the most abject state, enslaved to the power of those, whose interest or ambition may lead them to oppress us, without the advantage of being near the throne to beg relief, while they would be supported by all the power and influence of the Bishops at home. We have no more to object to a Bishop over the Episcopal Churches in America than among the Canadians and Moravians, provided they have no more to do with us. We only desire the interests of our friends, that if Bishops must be sent, which we fear will be attended with bad consequences, they may be under such restraints, as are consistent with our present state of peace and liberty, and beg their influence to prevent these evils, which will inevitably disturb the peace of our Colonies without doing any real service to religion, or the Episcopal Churches. Do us the justice to assert that we love our most gracious King and the British Constitution,—that we are upon principle loyal as well as profitable subjects, and that our importance to Great Britain will become every day more evident, and take proper opportunities to lay these dangers before our friends with you, which will oblige thousands in America, and in particular, &c."

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Among the files in the hands of the Register of New Haven East Association is the following letter, relating to the same subject as the foregoing document. [The Register says a part of the letter is in short hand which he found very difficult to decipher. A few words, he says, are unintelligible.]

To Mr. Sproat,

Rev. Sir,—You desired me to let you know why we are persuaded in this city, that there is a determination, or a fixed resolution to send Bishops to America.

By a letter from Dr. Ch. [Chandler] which I have by me, I was informed that the Bishop of Canterbury, in a conference with him, said with some vehemence, that it was hard to deny that privilege to the Church of England in America that she allowed to all Dissenters, viz. liberty of conscience. And they were

determined, as he said, in a proper time, to send Bishops. The Doctor said he desired he might know before they were sent, which the Arch-Bishop promised him. Dr. Samuel Provost of our Colony told me that it was the last thing the Arch-Bishop gave his clergy in charge, not to tease the Bishop and others, with petitions from the clergy of the Colonies, for they would watch the opportunity, and make a point of sending Bishops without any further trouble. He also told a gentleman of great veracity of the —— —— that he [Dr. Smith] had given in a PLEA for establishing Bishops which would certainly take place. The Bishop of Canterbury, I was told by Mr. William S— [Smith] of New York, in his answer to Dr. Mayhew, declares that they would send Bishops as soon as it would be found agreeable to the P., and that may be easily accomplished by the Governor and Assembly of some of our Colonies, which would be taken for the voice of the people before the petition ;—and Doct. S— told me that the leading Quakers in this Province, offered to sign a certificate that they are willing to admit a moderate Episcopacy.

I saw two petitions from the Clergy of the Episcopal Church in New York and Jersey governments, petitioning for a Bishop or Bishops, complaining that more than a million, (in the other near a million) of petitioners or parishioners of Episcopalians (of persons of the ——— of Epis.) are without Bishops, while all other religious denominations had their forms of government full and complete. These were written the 2d Oct. 1765, and sent home, and with them five others, viz. 2 to the Arch-Bishops of York and Canterbury ; two to the 2 Universities ; one to the Bishop of London, one to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and one to the King ; 7 in all. And in them or these they reflect on other denominations as disaffected to Monarchical Government, and allege that the King's power, (or privilege) and theirs is inseparably connected. In that city it is the subject of conversation in the coffee-house and in the most public companies as an affair that must take place ; and as an affair that it would be disloyal and intolerant to oppose. One of their petitions above mentioned, was found among Dr. Chandler's papers, as Mr. Stockton informed Mr. William Smith, of New York, by a letter which I heard him read.

In the Annual Register for the year 1765, Mr. Allen of that city, showed me the plea proposed by Dr. Boulter, (who was a Bishop,) for sending Bishops to America. And Dr. S——— told me that they would have Bishops settled in America in spite of all the Presbyterian opposition, and added that the Quakers and Baptists would join with them against us. They say that their Bishops are only to have the *power* of ordaining, confirming, and taking care of the morals of their Episcopal Clergy. To such few would make objections. That is the Arch-Bishop's proposal, and Bishop Boulter, (or Butler's) scheme. As a Bishop is a state affair, known in the common law of England, by that law he has a right to establish courts, to take cognizance of all affairs matrimonial, testamentary, and relating to scandals ; and no denomination is free from his jurisdiction. That power they have a right by common law to exercise ; as we are informed by gentlemen as well skilled in the law as any on the Continent ; and under one of these three heads we must feel the severity of a spiritual Court. The friends of Episcopacy say that their power in England can-

not take place in America, for it is local and confined. We know that in New England governments—Tabellions, or Notaries public, are appointed by the Arch.Bishop of Canterbury, which shows that he claims this power by the common law. In New York we are told that all the marriage licenses granted by the Governor are stamped with the mitre; which shows that Bishops claim the power there in affairs matrimonial; and I am told that the Governor of New Jersey holds a commission from the Arch.Bishop to act for him in some things relating to affairs testamentary or matrimonial, or both. Hence it is evident from the conduct of the Arch-Bishop, that they claim this power, and that they will erect such courts to ruin and oppress us unless they be restrained by an act of Parliament; and that every friend of liberty should plead for, if Bishops must be sent among us. Thus have I briefly laid before you what I know in that affair, and wishing you safe to your family and connections, I am, Dear Sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

FRA. ALISON.

Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1766.

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In the Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia for May 27, 1767, p. 373, the Convention at Elizabethtown is thus noticed, and commissioners are appointed for the meeting at New Haven.

"The consideration of the Correspondence with the Associate Churches of Connecticut resumed.

"The Minutes of a Convention held at Elizabethtown, the 5th of Nov. last, by Delegates from the Consociated Churches in Connecticut and from this Synod, were read, and a plan of union proposed betwsen the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Churches formed at that Convention, was seriously considered and amended, and the following gentlemen, with any other ministers of this reverend body that please to attend, are appointed to meet with the delegates or commissioners from the Congregational and Consociated, or any Presbyterial bodies, at New Haven, the tenth day of next September, and there finally, on the part of this body, to complete the plan of union, and transact all other business that shall be found necessary in consequence thereof."

[Here follow a list of the gentlemen appointed delegates, which it is not necessary to insert.]

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The General Association of Connecticut, June 16, 1767, thus recognize the Convention at Elizabethtown.

"The Association being informed by the Delegates that the several particular Associations in the Colony, have considered and approved the design of a Convention at New Haven next September, agreeable to the motion made at the Convention in Elizabethtown last November, and have appointed Delegates to attend it: desire the Moderator to signify the same to the Rev. Synod by a letter to the Rev. John Rodgers of New York, which is as follows:

"REV. SIR,

"By order of the General Association now regularly convened at Middletown, I am desired to inform you, and by you, the Rev. Synod of New York

and Philadelphia, that the proposed Convention at New Haven in Sept. next has been considered and approved by the particular Associations through the Government, and they have appointed Delegates to attend the Convention agreed to by the Rev. Convention at Elizabethtown in November last; and to assure you that with great respect we are your brethren in the faith and fellowship of our common Lord Jesus Christ."

[The Rev. Thomas Ruggles was the Moderator.]

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## CONVENTION AT NEW HAVEN.

New Haven, Sept. 10, 1767.

The General Convention met: Ubi post preces sederunt. Of the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison, Messrs. William Ramsey, William Kirkpatrick, Benjamin Hait, Alexander McWhorter, Azel Rowe, John Ewing, Patrick Alison, Thomas Lewis, Nehemiah Bacher, Chauncey Graham, Eliphalet Ball, Solomon Mead, John Rodgers, and Jedediah Chapman.

Of the Rev. the Presbytery of Boston, Messrs. Jonathan Parsons and David McGregory.

Of the Rev. the Associated Pastors of Connecticut, Messrs. Nathaniel Eells, Joseph Fish, Philemon Robbins, Ebenezer Devotion, Benjamin Throop, Benjamin Pomroy, James Cogswell, Timothy Pitkin, Edward Dorr, Samuel Lockwood, William Russel, James Sproat, Noah Wells, Daniel Farrand, Nathaniel Bartlett, John Devotion, Robert Ross, and Hezekiah Gold.

The Convention was opened with a sermon, by Dr. Francis Alison, from 1 Cor. xii. 27. Dr. Alison was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Wells, Scribe. After prayer the Convention adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M.

3 o'clock, P. M. met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer.

Voted, That the thanks of the Convention be returned to the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison for his sermon delivered at the opening

of it, and that he be desired to give a copy of it that it may be printed.

The Minutes of the Convention at Elizabethtown, in Nov. last were read in Convention; as also the Resolves of the Convention in Boston,* the Associated Pastors of Rhode Island and Providence, and of one Association in New Hampshire, in answer to the letters of invitation sent them from the Convention in Nov. last. After some conversation and debate upon the above Resolves;

Voted, That Messrs. Ebenezer Devotion, Parsons, Mc Gregory, Ewing, Mc Whorter, Sproat, and Dorr be appointed a Committee to bring in a plan for continuing the Convention.

Adjourned to 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

11th day. Met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer. Moved that the Resolves of the Convention in Boston, in answer to the letter of invitation be reconsidered; the same were accordingly read, and a free conference had upon the contents of them.

A Plan for continuing this Convention, prepared by the Committee appointed for that purpose, was brought in and read in

* The Resolves here referred to are supposed to be the votes in the following Extract from the Records of the Convention of Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts.

"Boston, May 27, 1767. A letter from the Rev. Delegates from the Associated Pastors in Connecticut, and the Rev. Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, convened at Elizabethtown, Nov. 5th, 1766, to the Rev. Convention of the Congregational Pastors in Massachusetts-Bay, inviting them to send their Delegates to the proposed General Convention at New Haven, on September 10th, 1767, was communicated to the Convention, together with a Plan of Union, drawn up by the Delegates aforesaid; to take place among the Pastors of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in North America."

May 28. "Voted, &c. Whereas we have received a letter from the Rev. Delegates (aforesaid) &c. &c. That although we are not prepared to send Delegates to the proposed Convention, yet we take this occasion to declare our sincere affection to our Brethren and fellowship with them in the Gospel, and our readiness at all times to unite our counsels and endeavors with them for the spreading of the Gospel, defending the liberties of these Churches, for cultivating love and harmony among ourselves, and with our friends abroad, and for promoting the kingdom of our common Redeemer."

"Voted, That the aforesaid Pastors of the town of Boston with," &c. "be a Committee to make a respectful answer to the aforesaid letter, and also to maintain a friendly correspondence with our Brethren aforesaid; said Committee to make a report at our next meeting."

Voted, "That (the aforesaid Committee) be desired in the name of the Convention, to write to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, to thank them for the concern they have expressed for our religious liberties; and to desire that they would give us their assistance, and use their influence for the preservation of the same, and in particular, that a Bishop may not be sent among us."

the Convention, and after some debate and consultation upon the contents of it, the Convention adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M.: met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer.

After some particular conference upon the plan of union drawn up in Nov. last, it was agreed by this Board that the following addition be made to the 2d Article, viz.: immediately after the words, "or over any other Church or Pastor,"—these words, "nor shall any counsel or advice be asked or given, in this General Convention, relative to any internal debates subsisting, or that may subsist, in any of those bodies."

Voted, That letters be wrote in the name of this Convention, to the several Rev. Bodies in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, in answer to those received from them: And that Dr. Alison and Mr. Ewing be appointed to prepare and send a letter to the Convention in Boston; Messrs. Eells and Fish, to our Brethren in Rhode Island; and Messrs. Mc Gregory and Parsons, to our Brethren in New Hampshire.

Voted, That the following gentlemen be appointed as Committees, to carry on an epistolary correspondence with our friends in Great Britain, particularly with Dennis Derbert, Esq. and Mr. Samuel Smith, merchant in London—with our Brethren in the Massachusetts, &c., and with each other, viz.: in Pennsylvania—the Rev. Dr Francis Alison, Messrs. Richard Treat, and John Ewing; in New York and New Jersey—Messrs. John Rodgers, Joseph Treat, Alexander Mc Whorter, and Benjamin Hait; in Connecticut—Messrs. Noah Hobart, James Lockwood, Naphtali Daggett, Edward Dorr, and Noah Wells.

Ordered that the next meeting of the General Convention be at Elizabethtown, on the first Tuesday of October, which will be in the year 1768, unless the Chairman, with the advice of the Committee of Correspondence, shall see it necessary to order a meeting sooner.

The Convention concluded with prayer by the Chairman.

The above are the doings of the Convention.

A true copy extracted from the doings of the Convention.

Test, Noah Wells, Scribe.

Notice of the preceding Convention on the Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, 18th–20th of May, 1768, p. 380.

"The Members of this Synod, appointed to meet the Convention at New Haven last year, report, that many of them did meet according to order, and the plan laid before the Synod last year was accepted: and that they have appointed another Convention the first Wednesday of October, at Elizabethtown."

[Here follow a list of delegates.]

"The Synod do order Dr. Alison to write to the General Association of of Consociated Churches in Connecticut, to appoint one of their members to open with a sermon at Elizabethtown. And the Synod order that the Minutes of said Convention be laid before this body every year."

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In the Minutes of the General Association of Connecticut for June, 1768, there is the following vote:

"Voted, That Mr. Dickinson, who is appointed a Delegate to the General Convention at Elizabethtown in October next, be desired to preach at the opening of the Convention; and in case of his failing, Mr. Williams, another of our Delegates, is desired to attend that service."

There are also entries of a concurrence of the General Association with the Synod about the admission of members to the Convention, and about voting, which will appear in the Minutes of the next Convention, and need not therefore be inserted in this place. See next page.

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## CONVENTION AT ELIZABETHTOWN.

Elizabethtown, New Jersey, Oct. 5, 1768.

The Rev. General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. Ubi post preces sederunt.

Present from the Synod, Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, Wheeler Case, William Mills, John Rodgers, Thomas Lewis, Timothy Jones, Joseph Treat, James Caldwell, William Kirk-

patrick, John Blair, Robert Smith, Joseph Montgomery, Richard Treat, Andrew Hunter, John Ewing, Solomon Mead, John Close, John Brainerd, Jacob Green.

From Connecticut, Rev. Messrs. Elnathan Whitman, Eliphalet Williams, Nathaniel Whitaker, Mark Leavenworth, Warham Williams, Enoch Huntington, John Smalley, Joseph Bellamy, and Moses Mather.

The Rev. Mr. Elnathan Whitman was chosen Chairman, and the Rev. Messrs. John Ewing and Enoch Huntington were chosen Scribes.

The Convention was opened by the Rev. Mr. Eliphalet Williams, by a sermon from Psalm cxxii. the 4 last verses.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last General Convention be read. A minute of the General Association was brought in and read, which is as follows:

"Whereas some dispute arose in the last General Convention concerning the admission of members to vote in said Convention; and whereas we understand that the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia in order to put an end to that dispute for time to come, did at their last meeting agree that though any gentleman who shall think proper may be freely permitted to be present in Convention, yet none but the Delegates shall be allowed to vote in said Convention: this Association heartily concurs with the above limitation, and moreover give it as our opinion and advice that none but the Delegates be permitted publicly to debate any case before the Convention, unless particularly requested so to do. And it is further declared as the opinion and advice of this body, that it is not expedient for the future, that any of our Associations delegate more than two members to the General Convention."

"Finally, we think it may be advisable that in a future General Convention, nothing be an act of said Convention, considered as the voice of the united body, but what has the major vote of the respective members that shall be present, both from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and from the Consociated Pastors in Connecticut."

A letter from the Association of the Western District of the County of New London, giving reasons for their declining to send delegates, and moving that an annual correspondence by letters between the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and the General Association be substituted, instead of the Annual Convention, was brought in and read.

Ordered, That the Rev. Messrs. Ewing, Smalley, and Blair be a Committee to prepare a draught of a letter to the Deputies for managing the affairs of Dissenters in England, in order to open a correspondence with them; and lay it before the Convention to-morrow morning.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

6th day: at 8 o'clock, A. M. the Convention met. Ubi post preces sederunt qui supra—together with the Rev Mr. Robert Ross, of Stratfield in Connecticut.

Ordered that the minutes of the last sederunt be read.

The Committee appointed last night to prepare a draught of a letter to the Dissenting Committee in England, brought in one, which being read and corrected, was approved, and is as follows, viz.:

"GENTLEMEN,

"The Pastors of the Consociated Churches of Connecticut have agreed with the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to meet annually by Delegates in Convention on the most catholic foundation; to give information of the public state of our united interests; to join our counsels and endeavors together for spreading and preserving the civil and religious liberties of our Churches; to recommend, cultivate, and preserve loyalty and allegiance to the King's Majesty, and to keep up a correspondence through this united body and with our friends abroad. This we have apprehended to be our duty, especially in our present circumstances, not only that we might strengthen our interest in suppressing and discouraging any measures that might be fallen upon by the people committed to our care, that would be inconsistent with our character as peaceable and loyal subjects, or detrimental to the public peace and tranquillity, but also that we might as faithful officers in the Church of Christ, watch over her rights and privileges, to endeavor more effectually to prevent any attempts of any other denomination of Christians to oppose us. The late attempts of the Episcopal Clergy among us to introduce an American Episcopate, have given a very general alarm to our Churches, who fled from the unmerciful rigor and persecution of Diocesan Bishops in our mother country to settle in

an uncultivated wilderness; the recollection of the cruelties and hardships which our fathers suffered before this peaceful retreat was opened for them, fills our minds with an utter abhorrence of every species of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution. And therefore we would guard with special care against admitting any just suspicion that we would suffer that to take place among ourselves which we so much condemn in others. We oppose not, therefore, the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America from any apprehension that we have any exclusive privilege above others, or from any right we have to endeavor to prevent them from enjoying the same liberties with any other denomination of Christians in the Colonies. We oppose the scheme from very different motives and principles. Our fears would not be so much alarmed could any rational method be devised for sending over Bishops among us stripped of every degree of civil power, and confined in the exercise of their ecclesiastical functions to their own societies: and could we have sufficient security that the British Parliament, that could send them over to us thus limited, to gain a peaceable settlement here, would never be induced by their complaints for the want of power to enlarge it at some future period. But it is very evident it is not that harmless and inoffensive Bishop which is designed for us, or the missionaries among us request; and therefore, we cannot but be apprehensive of danger from the proposed Episcopate, however plausible the scheme may be represented. We well know the jealousy of the Bishops in England concerning their own power and dignity, suffering by their example of such a mutilated Bishop in America, and we also know the force of a British act of Parliament; and have great reason to dread the establishment of British courts among us. Should they claim the rights of holding these courts, and of exercising the power belonging to their office, by the common law of England, (which is esteemed the birth-right of a British subject,) we could have no counterbalance to this enormous power in our Colonies, where we have no nobility, or proper courts, to check the dangerous exertions of their authority; and where our governors and judges may be the needy dependents of a prime minister, and therefore afraid to disoblige a person who is sure to be supported by the whole Bench of Bishops in England; so that our civil liberties appear to us to be in imminent danger from such an establishment. Besides, nothing seems to have such a direct tendency to weaken the dependence of the Colonies upon Great Britain and to separate them from her; an event which would be ruinous and destructive to both, and which we, therefore, pray God long to avert. And we have abundant reason to believe that such would be the jealousies and uneasiness of all other denominations of Christians among us that we cannot but tremble at the prospect of the dreadful consequences that could not be prevented from taking place upon the establishment of an American Episcopate. We have so long tasted the sweets of civil and religious liberty, that we cannot be easily prevailed upon to submit to a yoke of bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear."

"Besides all this we can assure you that the Episcopal Provinces of Maryland and Virginia do not appear to desire Bishops among them; it is only the request of a few discontented missionaries in the Middle Colonies; the laity

of their communion, (a few high officers excepted,) dread the power of a Bishop's court as much as any other denomination, and have a high sense of liberty, civil and religious. It, therefore, appears to us highly unreasonable to gratify these persons in a matter that is manifestly dangerous to the rights and privileges of so many of his Majesty's most dutiful loyal subjects. These are some of the many reasons which we have for our opposition to the proposed Episcocate, and the views by which we are actuated in this matter."

"We have reason to believe from the best intelligence we can get in this matter, both on your and our side of the Atlantic, that although the design of sending over Bishops to America may be laid aside for the present, yet the Bishops in England have the matter much at heart, and are daily watching a favorable opportunity of carrying it into execution, which is further confirmed by the large appropriations of lands and money both here and elsewhere, for the support of them in all their pomp and splendor. It therefore appears to us our duty to be constantly on our guard; but as our distance from the throne and Parliament renders us unable to do any thing to prevent it, until it be too late, we are obliged to depend on the vigilance and interest of our friends in Great Britain who are engaged in the same common cause with ourselves. Permit us, therefore, Gentlemen, to request the favor of you to unite your vigilance and endeavors with ours: and to open and continue a correspondence with us; and to transmit to us from time to time the earliest intelligence you can get relative to this or any other matter which you may judge either necessary or advantageous for us to know; and direct your letters to the Rev. Dr. Alison and Rev. Mr. Ewing in Philadelphia, to the Rev. Messrs. Rodgers and Treat in New York, and to the Rev. Messrs. Whitman and Wells in Connecticut."

Mr. Rodgers is requested to transmit a copy of this letter to our Brethren in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M. met according to adjournment, and P. P. S. Q. S. The Rev. Messrs. Ross, Wells, Whitman, Smalley, and Lockwood are appointed a Committee to carry on epistolary correspondence with our friends in London, with our Brethren in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, and with the Presbytery of Boston: the Rev. Messrs. Rodgers, Treat, and Caldwell a similar Committee in the Province of New York and New Jersey, and the Rev. Dr. Alison, with the Rev. Messrs. Treat and Ewing, for Pennsylvania.

Adjourned till Thursday, the 14th day of Sept. next, which will be in the year 1769, to meet at New Haven, Connecticut. Concluded with prayer.

Test, Enoch Huntington, Scribe.

Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 17, 18, 1769, page 392.

"The Delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at Elizabethtown last October, laid before the Synod the Minutes of the Convention agreeable to a standing order for that purpose."

Delegates are appointed to the Convention at New Haven, and "Dr. Witherspoon is appointed to open the Convention, or in case of his absence, Dr. Rodgers."

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In the brief Records of the General Association of Connecticut, for 1769, nothing is said about the General Convention.

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## CONVENTION AT NEW HAVEN.

New Haven, Connecticut, Sept. 14, 1769.

The Rev. General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. Ubi post preces sederunt.

From the Churches in Connecticut, the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, the Rev. Mr. Edward Dorr, the Rev. Mr. Joseph Perry, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Lockwood, the Rev. Mr. Elijah Lathrop, the Rev. Mr. Jedediah Mills, the Rev. Mr. Noah Whetmore, the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, the Rev. Mr. Nicholas Street, the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Ingersol, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Sherwood.

From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Mr. Richard Treat, the Rev. Mr. John Craighead, the Rev. Mr. James Sproat, the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, the Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, the Rev. Mr. Solomon Mead.

Dr. Rodgers opened the Convention by a sermon, from Acts xi. 24.

Mr. Richard Treat was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Dorr and Mr. Caldwell, Scribes.

Voted, that the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York, and the Rev. Noah Wells, of Stamford, be standing Registers, appointed by

this Convention, to receive all papers belonging to them, and to transmit to all future Conventions the Minutes of the preceding ones.

On looking over the Minutes of the last Convention it appears that there was a letter agreed upon to be sent to the Committee of Dissenters in London, requesting their kind interposition in favor of these Churches, and this Convention, apprehending their letter has unhappily miscarried, desire the Rev. Dr. Rodgers to take a copy of the same and sign it as our Register, and transmit it to the Committee of Dissenters in London according to the desire of the last Convention.

Voted, That the Rev. James Sproat be added to the Committee of correspondence in Philadelphia, and the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, and the Rev. Joseph Treat be a Committee in New York, that the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, and the Rev. William Tennent be a Committee in New Jersey, and that the Rev. Messrs. Noah Wells and Moses Mather be a Committee in Connecticut, and that the Committee in Connecticut correspond with the ministers of Boston and New Hampshire ; the Committee at New York with the ministers of Rhode Island and South Carolina ; the Committee in New Jersey with the ministers of Scotland ; and the Committee at Philadelphia with the ministers in England and Ireland.

Adjourned till the first Wednesday in October, at 11 o'clock, which will be in the year 1770, to meet at Elizabethtown in New Jersey.

Concluded with prayer.

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Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 16–21, 1770, p. 406.

"The Delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at New Haven in September last, laid before the Synod the Minutes of the Convention."

[A list of delegates to the next Convention follows.]

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Records of the General Association of Connecticut, for 1770.

"The Rev. Mr. Lockwood, of Wethersfield, is appointed to preach the sermon in the public Convention at Elizabethtown, and in case of his failure, Mr. Ross."

## CONVENTION AT ELIZABETHTOWN.

Elizabethtown, Oct. 3, 1770.

The Rev. General Convention of the Delegates from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, met according to adjournment. Post preces sederunt. From Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Nathaniel Taylor, Noah Benedict, Stephen Hawley; from the Synod, the Rev. Messrs. John Blair, Charles Beaty, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Azariah Horton.

The General Convention was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Taylor, from Ezek. xlvii. 9—11.

Mr. Taylor was chosen Chairman, and Mr. McWhorter and Mr. Hawley were chosen Scribes. Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Oct. 4. Met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S.

The Rev. Mr. Robert Ross and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, Jun., from Connecticut, and the Rev. Mr. John Ewing, Dr. Witherspoon, William Tennent, Sen'r., the Rev. Mr. Halsey, and the Rev. Mr. Beaty from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, are now come.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last Convention be read.

It was inquired whether Dr. Rodgers had complied with the appointment of the last General Convention at New Haven: to transmit a letter from them to the Committee of Dissenters in London. And we are informed that he complied with the said appointment; and has in answer a letter from said Committee, signed by Thomas Cotton, Secretary, which was produced and read, and is as follows, &c.*

And a letter of the same tenor and date, from said Committee, was sent to the Committee of the General Convention.

Mr. Beaty, Mr. Ewing, and Mr. Benedict are appointed a Committee to prepare an answer to the Committee of Dissenters in London, and bring it in, in the afternoon. After the General

* This letter has not been found.

Convention had maturely considered the expediency of having an agent in London, concluded that it was useful and important. And it is recommended to all the members of the Convention, and in particular to Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Rodgers, Mr. Wells, Mr. Ewing, Dr. Alison, and Mr. Beaty, to endeavor to find out a proper person in London, for that purpose, to propose to the next General Convention.

It being represented to the General Convention, that the design and importance of it is not understood by many ministers at a distance, by which means, it is not so extensive as it might be, and is necessary to its greater usefulness. Wherefore the General Convention request the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, as he is now on his journey to the eastward, that he take all proper opportunities to represent to our Brethren in the Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, the utility of the Convention, and the importance of their uniting with us. And it is ordered that he be furnished with a copy of the plan of the General Convention by the Scribes. The Rev. Messrs. John Blair, Robert Ross, Nathaniel Taylor, and James Caldwell, are appointed by the General Convention, to wait upon the General Association of Connecticut, which is to meet at Reading on the 3d Tuesday in June next—to converse with said Association and endeavor to impress upon them the utility of continuing the General Convention, and the importance of a punctual attendance upon it. And also Mr. Beaty and Mr. Hawley wait upon the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, (which is to meet at Philadelphia the third Tuesday of May next.) for the same purpose. And Dr. Bellamy and Mr. Trumbull, of North Haven, are requested to join these gentlemen. Adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M. met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

The Committee appointed to prepare an answer to the Committee of Dissenters in London, accordingly brought in a draught of a letter, which being read, corrected, and approved, is as follows, &c.*

* The letter also has not been found.

Ordered, that the letter be transcribed and signed by the Chairman, and sent with a duplicate to Dr. Rodgers, or Dr. Alison, to be transmitted to Jasper Mauduit, Esq. in Hackney, near London; or to Mr. Thomas Cotton, attorney at Law in Hackney. Appointed that Mr. Halsey, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. McWhorter, be a Committee, to write to gentlemen in Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas, in order that they may obtain all the instances of Episcopal oppressions they can in said Colonies, and prepare them to be laid before the next General Convention. Mr. Hobart of Fairfield, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Ross are desired to collect the instances of the lenity of their government with regard to the Episcopal Dissenters therein. And the Committee of Connecticut, viz. Mr. Wells and Mr. Mather, are desired to write to such ministers in the eastward governments, as they may think proper, to obtain instances of the same nature.

Adjourned to the first Wednesday in Sept. 1771, at 10 o'clock, to meet at Norwalk. Concluded with prayer.

A true copy of the Minutes of the General Convention met at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, Oct. 3, 1770.

Test, Stephen Hawley, Scribe.

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Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, for May 15—20th, 1771, page 416.

"The Delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at Elizabethtown in Oct. last, brought in the Minutes of their proceedings, which were read."

Delegates to the next Convention were appointed.

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Records of the General Association of Connecticut, for June, 1771.

"The Rev. Messrs. Taylor and Ross according to the appointment of the last General Convention, laid before this body the importance of punctually attending every General Convention, particularly the next at Norwalk; and 'tis hereby earnestly recommended to the Delegates now chosen that they do attend."

## CONVENTION AT NORWALK.

Norwalk, Sept. 4th, 1771.

The Rev. the General Convention of the Delegates from the several Associations in Connecticut, and of the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. Ubi P. P. Sedt.: From the Association of the Western District of Fairfield, the Rev. Mr. Moses Dickinson and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent; from the Eastern District of Fairfield, the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross and the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Bartlett; from the Association of Litchfield, the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Taylor and the Rev. Judah Champion; from the North Association of Hartford County, the Rev. Mr. Theodore Hinsdale; from the Association of New Haven County, the Rev. Mr. Elizur Goodrich and the Rev. Mr. Amos Fowler.

From the Synod, the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison, the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery, Rev. Mr. John Close, Rev. Mr. Jedediah Chapman, Rev. Mr. John Woodhull, Rev. Mr. Charles Beaty, Rev. Mr. James Sproat, Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, Rev. Mr. Solomon Mead, Rev. Mr. William Mills.

The Convention was opened with a sermon, by the Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery, from Ps. ii. 6.

The Rev. Dr. Rodgers was chosen Chairman.

The Rev. Messrs. Caldwell and Champion were chosen Scribes.

Dr. Alison reports, that he had received a letter from Mr. Thomas Cotton, Secretary to the Committee of Dissenters in London, in answer to the letter sent by the Convention last year, which is not present, but that the substance of it was,—that the Committee did not know of any particular attempts making on their side of the water to introduce an American Episcopate, at present; they would however carefully observe the motions of the friends of that scheme, and they desired us to do the same on this side, and communicate to them whatever attempts are making here.

The appointment of an agent in London, which was referred from the last Convention, was now considered, and after mature deliberation it was unanimously determined for the present not to appoint an agent, but to continue our correspondence with the Committee of Dissenters as before.

And Dr. Alison and Mr. Dickinson are desired to bring in the draught of a letter to the said Committee.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 8 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

5th day: 8 o'clock, the Convention met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Also the Rev. Mr. John Brainerd and the Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Halsey from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia are now come.

Ordered to read the minutes of the last sederunt.

It is now reported to this Convention that Dr. Witherspoon complied with the appointment of last year in representing to the ministers in Boston the necessity of extending this Convention, but we are not yet fully informed what success he met with.

Mr. Ross and Mr. Taylor report, that they waited upon the General Association, agreeable to the appointment of last year, and were favorably received.

Mr. Beaty also fulfilled his appointment to the Synod, and was also received in like manner.

Mr. Wells, one of the standing Registers for this Convention, is desired to lay the Minutes of the several meetings of this General Convention before the General Association of this Colony of Connecticut at their next meeting, and afterwards from year to year, if desired.

The Committee appointed last year to collect instances of oppression or lenity with respect to religious denominations in the several governments, appear to have taken considerable pains to answer the ends of their appointment, and related many instances and facts to this purpose. But as the good intention of the Convention in this affair is not yet completed, and inasmuch as it would be of great advantage to this Convention, and the common interests of mankind to be acquainted with the religious constitutions of the several governments on this continent—we do appoint for that purpose, for the colony of Nova Scotia, the

Rev. Dr. Alison; for the colony of New Hampshire, the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, of Norwalk; for the colony of Massachusetts, the Rev. Mr. Noah Wells; for the colony of Rhode Island, the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross; for the colony of Connecticut, the Rev. Mr. Elizur Goodrich; for the province of New York, the Rev. Dr. Rodgers; for the province of New Jersey, the Rev. Mr. John Brainerd; for the province of Pennsylvania, the Rev. Mr. James Sproat; for the government of New Castle and province of Maryland, the Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery; for the dominion of Virginia, the Rev. Mr. James Caldwell; for the province of North Carolina, the Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Halsey; for the province of Georgia, the Rev. Mr. Alexander Mc Whorter: who are desired respectively to obtain the Charters, Laws, and Statutes of those Colonies, and to extract from them whatever respects ecclesiastical affairs; also the usages and customs of those Colonies, by which the religious liberties of any denomination have been, or now are, either enlarged or abridged, and lay the result of their inquiry before our next Convention.

And the Rev. Mr. John Maltby, of South Carolina, who is present, is desired to collect materials agreeable to the above resolution, from the Charter, Laws, and usages of that province, and transmit the same to Dr. Alison in Philadelphia, by him to be prepared for, and laid before the next Convention.

Dr. Alison brought in the draught of a letter to the Committee of Dissenters in London, which being read, was approved, and the Chairman is desired to sign two copies, of which he is to send one, and Dr. Alison the other, to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., near London. The letter is as follows:

"Norwalk, in Connecticut, 5 Sept. 1771.

"Sir,

"We are informed that a letter in answer to ours of the 3d of Oct. 1770, by favor of Mr. Cotton, came to Dr. Alison, who entrusted the care of it to a person who has neglected to lay it before this Convention, and that you therein promised to have a watchful care of our liberties, and to give us timely notice if attempts were still continued to establish Diocesan Episcopacy in the Colonies; and as you desired us to give you the earliest intelligence of any attempts that might be made in the Colonies for this purpose, with the sincerest gratitude we acknowledge your friendship, and beg leave to inform you that we are still greatly alarmed. The whole Bench of Bishops, and many bigots with you are constantly teased by our missionaries to procure an American Episcopate.

"The late Arch-Bishop Secker, if we remember right, promised that if any province petitioned for a Bishop, it would be granted; and great pains have been taken to engage the clergy in Virginia and Maryland to petition for this favor. That some of the clergy in Virginia formed petitions for a Bishop, and that four out of twelve that were convened at that time protested against the measure, must be facts now well known in London, as the debates on this subject among the Episcopal clergy themselves were high, and are printed in the public papers in Williamsburgh and Philadelphia;* two of the protestors are professors in the College of William and Mary,† and the house of Burgesses in that colony, nemine contradicente, publicly voted their thanks to the protestors for making this seasonable stand for liberty. What the issue of this affair may be in the province is hard to determine, but we are informed that Mr. Horrax, a clergyman, is sent to England with these petitions, and the people of the colony are greatly alarmed lest he be sent back to them as their Bishop.

"The petitioning clergy affirm in the course of their public debates with their brethren, that all opposition among the Dissenters has ceased, and that the people of New England, of all others are now most anxious to have a Bishop established among them, than which assertion nothing can be more false, unless they mean by the people of New England, the missionaries and a few of their warm adherents. So far from this, that from the best information we can collect, the colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut have given instructions to their agents to oppose an American Episcopate, the certainty of which you may easily learn.

"A petition was likewise presented by eight of the clergy of Maryland to their Governor, requesting his interest, both in England and his own colony for establishing an Episcopate; and they inform his Excellency that they have prepared petitions for the throne, the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, Lord Baltimore, and the Bishop of London for the same purpose. The petition to the Governor is something extraordinary; a copy of which we will send you, and copies of the other petitions, if we can procure them. The Governor refused to admit the petition as an act of the whole clergy of Maryland, and told them that as an American Episcopate must be attended with many and very important consequences, he would lay it before the House of Representatives, which greatly mortified them, as they had mentioned that body in it with some disrespect. A circular letter was sent by the petitioners to the other clergy of the province to obtain their permission to put their names to the petitions to be sent to England, which was obtained from a great number without knowing all that was in the petitions; but ten of them laid a remonstrance before the Governor complaining of this conduct. But notwithstanding that neither the Governor nor Assembly have given their approbation, it is said the petitions are sent home.

* Philadelphia Gazette, August 8, 1771.

† These professors were the Rev. Messrs. Gwatkin and Henly. "They both protested against an American Episcopate in the Ecclesiastical Convention of Virginia in 1771, and afterwards the former published a pamphlet with the same view, under the following title: *A Letter to the Clergy of New York and Philadelphia, occasioned by an Address to the Episcopalians in Virginia. By the Rev. Thomas Gwatkin, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in William and Mary College.* Williamsburgh, 1772. pp. 28."—Miller's Memoirs of the Rev. John Rodgers, D. D.

From this account you may clearly see the great industry of these gentlemen, and much more we have reason to suspect is done by them, in the other provinces, which has not so fully come to our knowledge; but from a disagreement among themselves, what we now write you has become matter of public notoriety. We now stand in need, if ever, of the assistance of all our friends to use their utmost skill and interest to avert this impending blow that so surely threatens our civil and religious liberties, and which if not prevented, must again inflame all our colonies, that have so lately regained the blessings of peace.

"We would by no means be understood as if we would endeavor to prevent an American Bishop, or Arch-Bishop, or Patriarch, or whatever else they would see fit to send, provided other denominations could be safe from their severity and encroachments; but this we think impossible: for no act of Parliament can secure us from the tyranny of their jurisdiction, as an act of Parliament may, and no doubt will be repealed at the importunate solicitations of the Bishops and others; nor can we have any security against being obliged, in time, to support their dignity, and to pay taxes to relieve the Society in paying their missionaries; and the Governors of our several colonies must either be submissive in all things to their will and pleasure, or be harassed and persecuted with continual complaints to all in power on your side of the water. In a word, we think Ecclesiastics vested with such powers dangerous to our civil and religious liberties; and it seems highly probable that it will in time break that strong connection which now happily subsists between Great Britain and her colonies, who are never like to shake off their dependence on the mother country until they have Bishops established among them.

"As we shall always acknowledge that we are under the greatest obligations to you for your friendship in this important affair, and earnestly desire the continuance of your correspondence, please direct any intelligence you may think proper to transmit to us, to the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison in Philadelphia, or to the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers in New York, or to the Rev. Mr. Elnathan Whitman, Connecticut.

"Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention, by

"John Rodgers, Chairman."

"P. S. We have with pleasure observed that some of our friends on your side of the water have made some just remarks, in the London Chronicle, on the Bishop of Oxford's sermon before the Society last February. They highly merit the thanks of the American colonies, and as we esteem ourselves indebted to your friendship for this favor, we beg you will be pleased to present our thanks to the person or persons that did so much justice to our cause.

"To Jasper Mauduit, Esq., Chairman of the Dissenting Committee—to be communicated."

Adjourned to meet at Elizabethtown, the last Wednesday but one in September, 1772, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Concluded with prayer.

The Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 20, 21st, 1772, pp. 426–7, mention that "the Minutes of the last General Convention were laid before the Synod," and read, and that certain members of Synod were appointed to attend the next Convention.

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Extracts from the Records of the General Association of Connecticut, for June, 1772.

"Instructions to the Delegates of the several Associations to attend the next General Convention to meet at Elizabethtown the last Wednesday but one in September, 1772.

"Rev. Brethren,

"Whereas some of the clergy of the Church of England have shewed great assiduity in soliciting an American Episcopate, and petitions (as we are informed) have been preferred to his Majesty, the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, &c., by Messrs. Cooper and Horrax, requesting the same, we inform you that 'tis the advice of this Association that you heartily concur with the Southern gentlemen in counteracting any motions that have or shall be made for said Episcopate, in such manner as may seem most convenient in said Convention."

"Voted, That the Rev. Samuel Clark, who is appointed delegate to the next General Convention at Elizabethtown, be desired to open said Convention with a sermon; and in case of his failing, Mr. Cotton M. Smith, another of our delegates, is desired to perform that service."

"Voted, To desire the Rev. Noah Wells, standing Register of the General Convention, annually to lay before this Board, the doings of said Convention."

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## CONVENTION AT ELIZABETHTOWN.

Elizabethtown, Sept. 23, 1772.

The General Convention met according to adjournment. Ubi post preces, present from Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Noah Wells, Samuel Clark, Cotton Mather Smith, Noah Williston, Thomas W. Bray, Hezekiah Ripley, Asahel Hart, Ebenezer Baldwin; from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Montgomery, William Foster, James Sproat, John Brainerd, William Tennent, Dr. Alison, Dr. Witherspoon, John Ewing, Jeremiah Halsey, Dr. Rodgers, Alexander Mc

Whorter, James Caldwell, Joseph Treat, William Mills, John Close. Mr. Clark opened the Convention by a sermon, from 2 Cor. iv. 1.

The Rev. C. M. Smith was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Ewing and Mr. Baldwin were chosen Scribes.

The Rev. Mr. Wells informed the Convention, that agreeable to the instructions of the last session, he sent to the General Association of the colony of Connecticut, the Records of this General Convention, which was well approved by the General Association, who also desired that the proceedings of this Convention be from year to year laid before them.

Dr. Alison produced the letter from the Deputation of the Dissenters in England, which was referred to in the Minutes of the last sessions; which letter is ordered to be recorded in the Appendix to the Minutes of the Convention.*

Dr. Alison laid before the Convention another letter from the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, in answer to the letter of this Convention, dated Sept. 5, 1771, to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., which is as follows:

"Rev. Sirs,

"Your letter of the 15th of Nov. last, directed to our late worthy Chairman, Jasper Mauduit, Esq., now deceased, and therein enclosing one from the General Convention, dated 5th of Sept. last, was delivered to our Secretary, Mr. Cotton; who laid it before our Committee, and they have referred it to us to return you an answer thereto, which we embrace the first opportunity of doing.

"We are not ignorant, and are sorry that you have any reason to be alarmed from the restlessness of the missionaries and their bigoted adherents, but hope you will depend upon the constant attention of our Committee to your interest to prevent, as much as in us lies, a Bishop from being sent over to you. And we do verily believe, that if Mr. Horrax comes over with such a view, he will go over without his errand, for we can with pleasure inform you, that since the receipt of your last, we have again made the strictest inquiry, and are able from undoubted authority to assure you, that though petitions have been presented, yet we do not believe they will meet with any success; that however the Bishops and clergy may labor the point, the persons in power do not seem to be at all for it at present, and we hope never will. And we must remind you, that in our last we desired you, if you found any petitions were handed about to be signed, you would send over counter petitions, signed by as many respectable persons as you could, which we think you should do as soon as possible, that they may be made use of, if needful. And we beg you would rest assured of

* The letter is wanting.

our continued endeavors to oppose the carrying into execution such a design. We have sent a letter, to the same purport as this, to the Rev. Dr. Alison, that they may be communicated by you or him, to the General Convention. And whenever you are disposed to correspond with us, be pleased to direct your letters to our present Chairman, Thomas Lucas, Esq., at Gray's Hospital, London.

"We are, with great esteem, Rev. Sir, your most obedient servants, &c.

"13th March, 1772."

Dr. Alison produced extracts from the laws of Nova Scotia, relative to religious liberty, agreeable to the order of the last Convention.

Mr. Wells also laid before the Convention similar extracts from the laws of Massachusetts Bay.

The Scribes with the Rev. Mr. Halsey, are appointed to prepare a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of the Dissenters in London, and to bring it in to-morrow morning.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 24: 8 o'clock, met according to adjournment; post preces sederunt qui supra, except Dr. Witherspoon. The Minutes of the last sederunt were read. Dr. Rodgers then produced extracts from the laws of New York; Mr. Brainerd from the laws of New Jersey; Mr. Sproat from the laws of Pennsylvania; and Mr. Caldwell from the laws of Virginia, respecting religious liberty, all which were read.

As the Convention have not received any extracts from the Charters, laws, &c. of the province of New Hampshire, the colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut, the provinces of North and South Carolina, Maryland and Georgia, the gentlemen appointed for that purpose the last sessions are still desired to prosecute that business, excepting that by reason of Mr. Tennent's removal, Mr. Baldwin is appointed for New Hampshire, and by reason of the death of Mr. Maltby, Mr. Halsey is desired to make extracts for South Carolina. As it is apprehended that the accounts of the state of religious liberty in the various colonies, may be made more complete, if longer time was allowed to the ministers who have drawn them up, it is therefore agreed, that they review, and make such alterations and additions as they shall judge necessary to answer the design of this Convention, and have them in readiness for their inspection at their next

sessions. And it is particularly recommended to them, to ascertain the number of the inhabitants in each of the colonies, with the proportion of the Episcopalians to the Non-Episcopalians.

The draught of a letter to the Committee of Dissenters in England was read, and after amendments, was approved by the Convention, and is as follows:

GENTLEMEN,

Your letter of the 13th March last, directed to the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison, (a duplicate of which was also directed to the Rev. Dr. Rodgers,) was communicated by him to the General Convention, now sitting at Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

The assurances you give us that the Episcopalians are not likely to succeed for the present, in their applications for an American Episcopate, afford us great satisfaction. We shall depend upon the constant attention of your Committee, to prevent as far as lies in your power, the establishment of Diocesan Episcopacy among us; and we shall always acknowledge with gratitude, your zeal for the cause of religious liberty on this extensive continent. We have abundant reason to believe, that the bigoted Episcopalians on this side the water, have by no means dropt the project, but will ever be restless in their attempts to accomplish their purpose, till they either obtain their design, or repeated disappointments oblige them to abandon it: though it has not come to our knowledge, that any thing new of this kind has been attempted in America the year past.

In your last you advise that if any petitions should be handed about to be signed, we should send over counter petitions, by as many respectable persons as we can, which you think ought to be done as soon as possible. But the late rejection and miscarriage of their petition to the throne, (of which we have lately been assured,) happily relieves us from the necessity of this measure for the present. We must beg leave to suggest to you that we cannot but think that if the numbers of the Non-Episcopalians in the several colonies on this continent, and their vast superiority to the Episcopalians in this respect were better known in Great Britain, than perhaps they now are, it might be of very considerable service to the cause of religious liberty among us. We are sorry that it is not in our power to state this matter accurately at present; but we determine as soon as possible, to furnish ourselves with such materials as shall enable us to do it with sufficient exactness, which we hope to accomplish by our next Convention, and we shall take care to communicate to you the result of our inquiries; from which you will easily see what credit is to be given to the magnified accounts, the missionaries frequently send home of the numbers of their adherents.

And we cannot but think it would be greatly advantageous to the common cause, to hold up to the view of the public our numbers and importance as often as there shall be a convenient opportunity.

If the intelligence we propose to send you should be communicated to the public through the channel of some of your newspapers or magazines, which

circulate farthest through the kingdom, we presume it might give more just ideas of the true state of things on this continent, that it is probable many at present have.

You have writers of abilities among you, and we cannot doubt their readiness to serve so important a cause as that of religious liberty.

If some of them would undertake to lay this matter before the public on your side of the water, they will merit our grateful acknowledgments, and we shall take care to furnish them with materials that may be depended upon.

Please to direct your letter to the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison in Philadelphia, or the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers in New York.

Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention.

Cotton Mather Smith, Chairman.

Mr. Wells is desired to obtain intelligence concerning the number of the Episcopalians and Non-Episcopalians in the province of Nova Scotia.

Adjourned to meet at Fairfield, in Connecticut, on the first Wednesday in Sept. 1773, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

Concluded with prayer.

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The Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, for May 19–21st, 1773, p. 440, mention that "the Minutes of the last General Convention were brought by Dr. Rodgers, their stated Register, and read," that delegates were appointed to the next Convention, at Stamford, Conn., and that Dr. Witherspoon was appointed to open the Convention with a sermon, but in case he should fail, that Mr. McWhorter is appointed in his room.

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The Records of the General Association of Connecticut, for 1773, do not notice the General Convention.

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## CONVENTION AT STAMFORD.

The General Convention of Delegates from the Rev. Associations in Connecticut, and from the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to the time of adjournment, Sept. 1, 1773, at Stamford, it being found inconvenient to meet at Fairfield, as appointed.

Post preces sederunt, from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. John Rodgers, Messrs. Elihu Spencer, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Benjamin Hait, John Close, Ichabod Lewis, Jeremiah Halsey, Samuel Mills. From Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Moses Dickinson, Jonathan Lee, Cotton Mather Smith, Samuel Lockwood, Robert Robbins, Robert Ross, Nathaniel Bartlett, Elizur Goodrich, William Russel, Joseph Strong, and Noah Wells.

Dr. Witherspoon opened the General Convention with a sermon, from 2 Cor. iv. 13.

Dr. Witherspoon was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Russel and Mr. McWhorter, Scribes.

The Registers reported, that the proceedings of last year's General Convention at Elizabethtown, were laid before the General Association of Connecticut, and before the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and were well accepted.

Dr. Rodgers and the two Scribes are appointed a Committee to prepare a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, to be brought in next sederunt.

Proceeded to inquire of the gentlemen appointed to make extracts from the Charters, Laws, &c. of the several colonies respecting the state of religious liberty in them, and finding some progress is made in this matter, it is ordered that these extracts be laid before the General Convention to-morrow morning.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 2, 1773: 8 o'clock, A. M. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Messrs. James Cogswell and Joseph Huntington, of Connecticut, are now come.

According to the agreement of last year, that the gentlemen who had made extracts from the Charters, &c. should review them, render them more complete, and ascertain the proportion of Episcopalians to Non-Episcopalians, Dr. Rodgers laid before us extracts from the laws of the province of New York; Mr. Goodrich from the laws of Connecticut; Mr. Wells from the laws of Massachusetts Bay—and with respect to the number of Episcopalians in proportion to Non-Episcopalians, Mr. Wells, who was appointed to this matter in Nova Scotia, has not been

able to accomplish it, and requests that some other gentleman be appointed to this business in his room: accordingly Mr. Huntington is desired to obtain an account of this matter, and lay it before the next General Convention.

Mr. Baldwin, who was appointed to make the extracts from the laws of New Hampshire, has not yet accomplished it, but proposes to do it, and therefore his appointment is continued, and he is requested to lay his extracts before our next Convention.

Mr. Ross, who was appointed for Rhode Island, has not yet obtained proper materials for the history desired, wherefore his appointment is continued.

Mr. Sproat and Mr. Montgomery, who were appointed for the provinces of Pennsylvania and Maryland, not being here, we are not favored with the extracts, and their appointments are continued.

Mr. Caldwell's appointment is continued to make additional extracts from Virginia.

Mr. Halsey, who was appointed for North and South Carolina, has not yet accomplished it, and his appointment is continued with respect to North Carolina; and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, of Charleston, being here present, is desired to make extracts from the laws of South Carolina, and give us an history of the progress and state of religious liberty in that colony, and send them to our next General Convention.

Mr. Brainerd sent extracts which he had made from the laws of the colony of New Jersey; and Mr. Spencer is desired to complete that matter according to the design of the Convention.

Mr. McWhorter laid before us extracts from the laws of Georgia.

Dr. Rodgers is requested to obtain what information he can respecting the state of religious liberty in West Florida.

Dr. Witherspoon is desired to obtain like information from Canada.

The several gentlemen who are appointed to this business are desired to proceed, and render the respective extracts and histories as perfect as possible, to be laid before our next General Convention.

The Committee appointed to bring in a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, brought one in, which was read, corrected, and approved,—and is as follows :

Gentlemen,

We have not been favored with an answer to our last to you of Sept. 27th, 1772, from whence we conclude that it may probably have miscarried, though it was followed some time after by a duplicate. We have the firmest conviction in your friendship and attachment to the cause of religious liberty on this extensive continent, and that you will carefully watch the motions of its Episcopal adversaries on your and our side of the water, who, we have the greatest reason to think, have their grand object of an American Episcopate still in view, notwithstanding the discouragements they have met with respecting its immediate accomplishment. They wait only a favorable opportunity of renewing their attempts, and, if possible effecting their design, big with the most fatal mischiefs to this growing country.

We are taking all possible pains to ascertain the number of Episcopalians and their proportion to the Non-Episcopalians of different denominations in the several colonies, and have made some progress in it ; but we find it a work of no small labor and difficulty to do it with proper precision.

We find it by a paper read before us at our present meeting, that the Episcopalians in the colony of New York bear the proportion of about one to twenty of its present inhabitants. By another of the same kind respecting the colony of Connecticut it appears they do not bear a greater proportion ; and in the provinces of New Jersey and Pennsylvania their proportionable numbers are less ; and in the Massachusetts government, Rhode Island, and province of New Hampshire, they are much less still ; and in the Southern colonies where Episcopacy is established, viz. : Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, the Non-Episcopalians are in some of them a majority, and in the rest a large and growing proportion.

We are pursuing this important design, and promise ourselves the pleasure of effecting it with a greater degree of accuracy before our next meeting, where you may expect to hear farther from us on this subject.

We beg leave also to inform you that we are collecting the state of religious liberty in the several colonies on this continent, and its progress in each of them from their first settlement, which may be capable of important uses in the grand struggle we or posterity may be called to make in this glorious cause, in which the happiness of thousands yet unborn is so deeply interested.

Your known zeal against the unjust encroachments of Episcopal domination supersedes the necessity of our repeating our requests that you will continue your wonted care on this head.

A line from you will be esteemed an additional favor ; and which be pleased to direct to the Rev. Dr. Alison in Philadelphia, or the Rev. Dr. Rodgers in New York.

Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention, by

John Witherspoon, Chairman.

The next meeting of the General Convention is appointed to be at Elizabethtown, the third Wednesday of September, 1774, at 3 o'clock, P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

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From the Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 18, 19th, 1774, pp. 453–4, it appears that the Minutes of the last General Convention were presented and read, and new delegates appointed.

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Minutes of the General Association of Connecticut, June, 1774.

"The Rev. Samuel Lockwood is appointed to preach the sermon at the opening of the next General Convention at Elizabethtown, and in case of his failure, the Rev. Mr. Baldwin is appointed.

"The doings of the last General Convention were read before this Association, and were well accepted."

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## CONVENTION AT ELIZABETHTOWN.

The General Convention of the delegates from the Consociated Churches in Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at Elizabethtown, Sept. 21, 1774.

From Connecticut were present, the Rev. Messrs. Ebenezer Baldwin, Thomas Wells Bray, Samuel Eells, Theodore Hinsdale, Nathaniel Taylor, Jeremiah Day, Samuel Sherwood, William Mackey Tennent. From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Rev. Dr. Francis Alison, Dr. John Rodgers, Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, James Sproat, Israel Read, Benjamin Hait, Jeremiah Halsey, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Jedediah Chapman, Joseph Montgomery, Patrick Alison.

The General Convention was opened by Mr. Baldwin, with a sermon, from Matt. xxiii. 8.

The Rev. Mr. Sherwood was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Day and Mr. Alison were chosen Scribes. P. P. S. Q. S.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last Convention be read. The

proceedings of the last Convention were laid before the General Association and Synod, and were well accepted.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last session be read.

The Convention proceeded to review the appointments made last year to obtain the knowledge of religious liberty in the several American colonies, &c. Received some satisfactory reports in consequence thereof, particularly from Mr. Huntington, respecting Nova Scotia, and Mr. Wells, respecting Massachusetts Bay, whose diligence and accurate investigation are highly commendable. Mr. Baldwin is desired to pursue his inquiries relating to the province of New Hampshire. And Mr. Halsey is desired to write Mr. Mc Clintock, soliciting his endeavors to furnish and obtain full information on the same subject, and transmit it to the next Convention. The respective appointments of Mr. Ross and Mr. Sproat are renewed. Mr. Montgomery reports that he has made some progress in collecting materials concerning the rise and progress of religious liberty, and ascertaining the proportion of Dissenters to the members of the established Church in Maryland. His appointment is continued, only Mr. Alison is desired to fix the proportion between the classes of people on the western shore of that province. Mr. Caldwell's appointment is continued. Mr. Halsey delivered a valuable detail concerning the first settlement of North Carolina, and of the ecclesiastical circumstances of the province, in its different periods until this time. Messrs. Caldwell and Alison are requested to write to such acquaintance as they may judge proper in the maritime counties of North Carolina, for a more accurate account of the condition of those counties according to the view of the Convention. Dr. Rodgers is desired to write Mr. Tennent, of Charleston, concerning the business committed to him, and quickening his performance of it. The Doctor is further to beg Mr. Tennent will address some capable person in Georgia, requesting of him the state of that province, and transmit the result of his inquiries to us. Dr. Rodgers reports that from certain information, it appears there is yet no ecclesiastical constitution fixed there, nor any laws enacted affecting religious liberty in West Florida.

The gentlemen appointed last year to furnish materials respecting the Jerseys having made no report to the Convention, Mr. McWhorter is desired to undertake and accomplish the matter.

Dr. Rodgers reports that he has been prosecuting his investigations relating to the province of New York, and expects to have them accomplished for the inspection of the next Convention.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

The Convention met at 3 o'clock, P. M., according adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last session be read. Mr. Goodrich having complied in part with his appointment, it is continued, and Mr. Bray is desired to inform him, that the Convention hope he will be able to finish the business committed to him before the next meeting. Dr. Rodgers brought in a paper handed to him by a friend, containing an abstract of the ecclesiastical laws of Barbadoes, with some remarks thereon.

It is agreed that a particular history of the several Colleges on the continent, should accompany the accounts drawn up respecting the provinces in which they are erected.

The Convention having received no answer from the Committee of Dissenters in England, to the letters sent there the two preceding years, it is judged inexpedient to write them at this time.

Adjourned to Greenfield, in Connecticut, on the first Wednesday in Sept. 1775.

Concluded with prayer.

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Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, for May 17—19, 1775, p. 464.

"The Minutes of the last General Convention were" presented, new delegates were appointed, and "Mr. Joseph Treat was appointed to open the Convention with a sermon, and in case of Mr. Treat's absence, Mr. Hait was appointed to preach the sermon."

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In the recorded Minutes of the General Association of Connecticut, in June, 1775, there is no notice of the doings of the General Convention the preceding year, nor reference to the then succeeding meeting the same year.

## CONVENTION AT GREENFIELD.

The Convention of delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at Greenfield, in Connecticut, Sept. 6, 1775, according to adjournment. Present,

From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Rev. Messrs. Samuel Mills, Ichabod Lewis.

From Connecticut, Rev. Dr. Wells, Messrs. William Mackey Tennent, Samuel Lockwood, Daniel Brinsmade, Joseph Huntington, Joseph Strong, Robert Ross, Theodore Hinsdale, Ebenezer Baldwin.

The Convention was opened by the Rev. Mr. Lockwood, with a sermon, from Jer. xiii. 16.

The Rev. Mr. Mills was chosen Chairman, and Messrs. Baldwin and Lewis, Scribes.

The session was opened with prayer by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the last Convention were ordered to be read. The Convention proceeded to make inquiry concerning the appointments made and continued, the last Convention, to gain information respecting the progress and present state of religious liberty in the several colonies.

A full and accurate account respecting the colony of Connecticut, was received from the Rev. Mr. Goodrich ; also an account of the numbers of Episcopalians and Non-Episcopalians in that colony, sufficiently exact to answer the purposes of this Convention. The body are well pleased with, and thankfully notice the accuracy and diligence of Mr. Goodrich in this matter : however, if Mr. Goodrich should ever be able to complete his account of the numbers for the remaining towns, with the same accuracy he has those of which he has sent a particular account, it is desired he would send them to be added to the amount already received.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, to meet at Mr. Tennent's. Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 7 : met according to adjournment. U. P. P. S. Q. S. The Minutes of the last session were read. The appointment

of Mr. Halsey and Mr. Baldwin for the province of New Hampshire is continued, and Mr. Huntington is joined with them.

Mr. Ross acquainted this body that he had applied to Dr. Stiles, of Newport, for materials respecting Rhode Island—that he had received intelligence from the Doctor, that he had made considerable progress in his collection, but by reason of sickness and other difficulties, had been unable to complete it.

Mr. Ross' appointment is continued, and he is desired to acquaint Dr. Stiles, that this body thankfully notice his assiduity in this matter, and desire he would perfect as soon as he conveniently can, the collection he has begun. Mr. Sproat's appointment for Pennsylvania is continued, and Mr. Duffield is joined with him.

Whereas no returns have been made from the Rev. Messrs. Montgomery, Caldwell, Alison, Rodgers, and McWhorter, their respective appointments are continued; and they are desired to render their accounts as complete as possible by the next Convention. The Rev. Dr. Wells is desired to acquaint the above mentioned gentlemen, who are absent, of the continuance of their appointments, also by reason of the critical situation New York is in at present, to request of Dr. Rodgers, that he would transmit to Dr. Wells the several papers in his hands belonging to this Convention.

The Convention are of opinion that it would be conducive to their general design, to obtain, in addition to their history of the rise and progress of religious liberty in the several colonies, accounts of the rise, progress, and present state of the several religious sects in the different provinces and colonies.

Accordingly the Rev. Dr. Wells is appointed to furnish such an account of the Episcopalians in New England; the Rev. Mr. Huntington of the Separatists and Separate Baptists also, so far as their histories are connected together; the Rev. Mr. Ross of the Baptists through the several colonies; Mr. Baldwin of the Glassites or Sandemanians; the Rev. Mr. Johnson, of Lyme, of the Rogereens; the Rev. Mr. Hinsdale of the Quakers in New England; the Rev. Mr. Halsey of the Quakers to the southward of New England; the Rev. Mr. Duffield of the Moravians; the Rev. Mr. Cooper of the Menists or Menonists; the Rev. Mr.

Robert Smith, of Poquea, of the Mountain New-Covenanters and Seceders; the Rev. Dr. Rodgers of the Jews. Appointments for the other sects are deferred to the next Convention.

The Chairman is desired to notify the several gentlemen above mentioned, who are not present, of their appointments.

The gentlemen appointed to furnish accounts of the rise, &c. of religious liberty in the several colonies, are desired to add to their accounts the state of the several Colleges or seminaries of learning, in the respective colonies, as in the Minutes of the last Convention.

The next meeting of the General Convention is appointed to be at Elizabethtown, on Wednesday, the 19th of Sept. 1776.

Concluded with prayer.

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Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 22, 1776, p. 473.

"The Minutes of the last Convention were brought in and read. The Synod considering the distracted situation of our public affairs, judge that an attendance on the Convention by any of their members the ensuing appointment will be impracticable, and order Dr. Rodgers to inform the General Association as early as possible thereof, together with their design of sending members to attend at the place appointed, on the third Wednesday of September, 1777."

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The original Minutes of the General Association of 1776, are lost; and it is not known whether any report of the General Convention of 1775 was made to the Association at that time.

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Printed Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 21, 1777, pp. 477-8.

"The Synod are of opinion that they cannot send any members to meet the General Convention on the third Wednesday of September next—and order Mr. Sproat to give notice thereof to the General Association of Connecticut; and that the Synod will cheerfully appoint members to attend said Convention whenever the situation of public affairs will admit of it."

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Note.—The Revolutionary War continuing until 1783, and resulting in the separation of the Colonies from Great Britain, no farther Convention was held. In the new state of things the British Government could not impose Diocesan Bishops upon the Americans.

The friendships, however, contracted between Presbyterian and Congregational Ministers at these Conventions, probably led to the correspondence formed some years after between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the General Association of Connecticut; and subsequently between the General Assembly and other Ministerial and Ecclesiastical Bodies in the Northern States.

If any of the missing letters mentioned in the foregoing pages, or any of the numerous documents like those which follow in the Appendix, are in existence, the publisher will be greatly obliged to any friends who will favor him with copies of them, or merely inform him where they may be found.

# APPENDIX.

[The Extracts and Account in the following pages, have been copied from papers which have remained among the descendants of Dr. Goodrich, and which are in his hand writing. The Account is signed by him.]

Extracts from the Charter and Laws of the Colony of *Connecticut*, in *New England*, that relate to Religion and Ecclesiastical affairs.

The Charter of this Colony was granted by King CHARLES the Second, A. D. 1662, with ample powers and privileges of legislation and government, and the enjoyment of all liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects. The Governor and Company are empowered to ordain and establish all manner of wholesome and reasonable laws for regulating all the affairs of the Colony; and after a number of particulars there is this general clause respecting Religion: "And for the directing, ruling, and disposing all other matters and things whereby our said people, inhabitants there, may be so religiously, peaceably, and civilly governed as their good life and orderly conversation may win and invite the natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Saviour of mankind, which in our royal intention, and the adventurers' free profession, is the only and principal end of this plantation." This declaration of King Charles in the Charter, most probably hath reference to something contained in the petition on which it was granted. The original settlement of the New England colonies was much owing to religious zeal; for though several attempts had been made to settle this land, and great sums spent for that purpose, yet all proved abortive till religion was the grand inducement, and oppression drove multitudes from their native soil. It is probable, that if the same liberty of conscience had always been enjoyed in England, that there is at present,—if corruption and arbitrary power had not usurped the rights of mankind, this country would still have remained a wilderness. If peace and purity, truth and liberty could have been enjoyed at home, the arduous undertaking of settling this country would have wanted many of great abilities and noble fortunes, who for the sake of their consciences cheerfully engaged and went through the amazing horrors, dangers, and inconveniences of of this then dreary wilderness. And as the first planters came almost wholly upon religious views, so we have no reason to think but that they were sincerely desirous of the conversion of the heathen natives, and indeed from the history of those times we are assured of the great zeal they discovered in this matter,

and of the pains that were taken to spread the knowledge of the Gospel among them, that they might with truth declare that the advancement of the Redeemer's cause and interest was the great and principal end of the plantation.

The same zeal and engagedness for religion appears in the grants of the *General Court* for the making of towns and societies, and in the petitions preferred for that purpose; but though we have most undoubted cause to honor the fathers of New England, and in particular of this colony, as men of great integrity, strict probity, and sincere piety, yet we must own there was a mixture of superstition in their religious sentiments; and though they fled their native land that they might be free from religious oppression, and enjoy a worship agreeable to their consciences, yet we must lament they understood the nature and extent of religious liberty no better, than by their laws and oppression of other sects, they seemed to do; we must indeed impute this in a great measure to the times in which they lived, and not to the general principles they professed, or the nature of that church policy they embraced. The general principles they professed were truly Protestant—that the only rule of religion is the Holy Scripture, the fixed, sufficient and invariable canon, incapable of addition or diminution; and that every one must see to it that his faith be resolved into this foundation as the reason of it; and on this principle they framed their platform of faith and worship, as in their view most agreeable to the Scripture. The faith they professed was in general the same, as that contained in the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, and afterwards in the *Assembly's Catechisms* and Confession. The ecclesiastical polity they adopted was what is called the *Congregational way.* Happy, if while they supported and maintained their own sentiments and worship, they had granted a reasonable and equitable toleration to persons of different persuasions; but though this was not granted at first, yet the principles of liberty adopted in the general profession of these churches led to it. Here the Scripture was enjoyed, and holden to be the only sufficient rule; the study of it was encouraged; the churches were so constituted that the members enjoyed peculiar privileges, and especially that of choosing their own ministers, in which all shared who were obliged to contribute to their support. This naturally leads to exercise the right of private judgment in matters of religion ourselves, and to see that the same should be allowed others; nor is there any of our Christian liberties more to be attended and guarded than this of choosing our own teachers. Thus the principles professed and the nature of ecclesiastical policy originally adopted had a friendly aspect on religious liberty, and by degrees have banished whatever might be esteemed injurious and oppressive of those who dissent from the Established Churches, as we shall find by review of the ecclesiastical laws of this colony.

The laws of this colony have been sundry times revised and published by order of the General Assembly, particularly in or about the years 1672, 1702 and 1750. A view of the religious and ecclesiastical laws as they are found in these several editions, with the variations made from time to time, will give some proper knowledge not only of the present state of religious liberty, but of the progress of it from the first settlement of the colony to this day.

The laws I shall mention relate to, or may be ranked under the following titles or heads—of Idolatry—Witchcraft—Blasphemy—Deism—Heresy—Pro-

fane Swearing—Church State—Public Worship—Sabbath, or Lord's Day—Ministers and their Support.

There are some of these which might be omitted, as having but little concern in the present inquiry; and yet as in one view they may be reduced to the head of religion, I shall just touch upon them, nor will it be altogether useless to the design of these extracts, as thereby we may have a more full view of the present subject, as it hath been treated of in the laws of this colony.

I. Of Idolatry.

"If any man or woman, after legal conviction, shall have or worship any other God but the Lord God, he shall be put to death."

II. Of Witchcraft.

"If any man or woman be a witch, that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death."

These laws against idolatry and witchcraft are found in the same words in the first and second editions, but are entirely omitted in the third.

III. Of Blasphemy.

"If any person within this colony shall blaspheme the name of God the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost with direct, express, presumptuous, and high handed blasphemy; or shall curse in like manner, such person shall be put to death."

This is found in all the editions of the laws, and is now in force.

IV. Of Deism.

"If any person within this colony, having been educated in or having made a profession of the Christian religion, shall by writing, printing, teaching or advised speaking, deny the Being of a God, or any one of the Persons in the Holy Trinity to be God; or shall assert and maintain there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority, and be thereof convicted," &c. Such persons to be incapable of any office, ecclesiastical, civil or military.

This act is not found in the first or second, but only in the third edition of the laws, and is still in force.

V. Of Heresy.

"This Court being sensible of the danger persons are in of being poisoned in their judgments and principles by heretics, whether Quakers, Ranters, Adamites or the like, do see cause to order that no persons in this colony shall give any unnecessary entertainment unto any Quaker, Ranter, Adamite, or other notorious heretic, upon penalty of five pounds for every such person's entertainment, to be paid by him that shall so entertain them; and five pounds per week shall be paid by each town that shall suffer their entertainment aforesaid."

The Governor and Assistants are also empowered by this act to commit such heretics to prison, or send them out of the colony: No person allowed any unnecessary discourse with them; and their books forbidden to all except magistrates and ministers.

These laws are the same in the first and second editions, but in the acts of the General Assembly in the year 1706, as far as they respect *Quakers* they are

repealed: otherwise I find not but they were in force till the third edition of 1750, in which they are wholly omitted.

### VI. Of Profane Swearing and Cursing.

An act against Profane Swearing and Cursing.

"Be it enacted, &c., That if any person within this colony, shall swear rashly, vainly, or profanely, either by the holy name of God, or any other oath; or shall sinfully and wickedly curse any person or persons, such person so offending shall upon conviction thereof before any one Assistant or Justice of the Peace, forfeit and pay for every such offence the sum of six shillings," &c., and if unable, to sit in the stocks.

### VII. Of Persons embodying into Church State.

"It is ordered by the authority of this Court, that no persons within this colony shall in any wise embody themselves into church estate without consent of the General Court and approbation of neighbor churches."

This law is found in the first and second editions, and as I find no legal repeal of it, I suppose it stood in force till the laws were revised and published in 1750, in which edition it is wholly omitted.

### VIII. Of Public Worship.

"It is also ordered by this Court, that there shall be no ministry, or church administration entertained or attended by the inhabitants of any plantation in this colony distinct and separate from and in opposition to that which is openly and publicly observed and dispensed by the approved minister of the place, except it be by approbation of this Court and neighbor churches." Penalty five pounds.

This law is found in the first and second editions, but before the third edition, several laws intervened, relative to this matter.

The churches originally approved were those of the Congregational persuasion, with an allowance of those who were Presbyterially inclined in their persuasion and profession in church ways or assemblies without disturbance.

Care was taken that the ministry of the word should be established in every town and plantation; and wherever it was established and approved, every person was obliged to attend respectively on the Lord's day, and such other days as were appointed by authority, upon certain penalties to be inflicted by the magistrate: and all contemptuous behavior toward the word preached or the dispensers of it, was severely punished.

No public assemblies for religion were allowed but with express consent of the General Court; nor do I find any thing which looks like an act of toleration till the year 1708, being the 7th year of Queen Anne, when the General Assembly passed the following "Act for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministry established by the laws of this government."

"It is enacted and ordained by the Governor, Council, and Representatives in the General Court assembled and by the authority of the same, for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministry established by the ancient laws of this colony, and still continuing, that if any such persons

shall at the county court of that county they belong to, qualify themselves according to an Act made in the first year of the late King William and Queen Mary, granting liberty of worshipping God in a way separate from that which is by law established, they shall enjoy the same liberty and privilege within this colony without any let, hindrance, or molestation whatsoever."

In the same Act it is provided, that this allowance or toleration shall make no alteration in respect of ministerial support: the only privilege it gives to persons who qualify themselves as above is public allowance of worshipping God in a way agreeable to their consciences, though different from the established and approved; and hence in subsequent laws such assemblies for worship are said to be allowed.

The same year the General Assembly passed the following act entitled "An act in approbation of the Agreement of the Reverend Elders and Messengers of all the churches in this government, made and concluded at *Saybrook*, 1708.

"*The Reverend Ministers and Delegates from the Elders and Messengers of the Churches in this Government, met at* SAYBROOK, *Sept. the ninth*, 1708, *having presented to this Assembly a Confession of Faith, Heads of Agreement and Regulation in the administration of Church Discipline, as unanimously agreed and consented to by the Elders and Messengers of all the Churches in this Government.*

"This Assembly do declare their great approbation of such agreement, and do ordain that all the churches within this government, that are or shall be thus united in doctrine, worship and discipline, be and for the future shall be owned and acknowledged established by law.

"Provided always that nothing herein shall be intended or construed to hinder or prevent any society or church that is or shall be allowed by the laws of this government, who soberly differ or dissent from the united churches hereby established, from exercising worship and discipline in their own way according to their consciences."

I find nothing worthy of notice, that properly comes under this head till the year 1742, when the General Court passed an Act entitled "An act for regulating abuses and correcting disorders in ecclesiastical affairs." I shall recite the preamble of this act, though lengthy, and give an abridgment of the matters contained in it.

"*Whereas this Assembly did by their act made in the 7th year of the reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne, establish and confirm a Confession of Faith, and an Agreement of ecclesiastical discipline, made at Saybrook, A. D.* 1708, *by the Rev. Elders and the Messengers delegated by the churches in this colony for that purpose, under which establishment his Majesty's subjects inhabiting in this colony have enjoyed great peace and quietness, till of late sundry persons have been guilty of disorderly and irregular practices: whereupon the Assembly in October last did direct to the calling a General Consociation to sit at Guilford in November last, which said Consociation was convened accordingly: at which Convention it was endeavored to prevent the growing disorders among the ministers that have been ordained or licensed by the Associations in this government, and likewise to prevent divisions and disorders among the churches and ecclesiastical societies settled by order of this Assembly: notwithstanding which divers of the ministers ordained as aforesaid, and others licensed to preach by some of the Associations allowed by*

*law have taken upon them without any lawful call to go into parishes immediately under the care of other ministers, and there to preach to and teach the people; and also sundry persons some of whom are very illiterate and have no ecclesiastical character or any authority whatsoever to preach or teach, have taken upon them publicly to teach and exhort the people in matters of religion both as to doctrine and practice; which practices have a tendency to make divisions and contentions among the people in this colony, and to destroy the ecclesiastical constitution by the laws of this government, and likewise to hinder the growth and increase of vital piety and godliness in these churches, and also to introduce unqualified persons into the ministry; and more especially where one Association doth intermeddle with the affairs that by the Platform and Agreement abovesaid made at Saybrook aforesaid, are properly within the province and jurisdiction of another Association, as to the licensing of persons to preach and ordaining ministers.*

"*Therefore be it enacted*," &c. By this act any ordained minister or licensed person to preach who should enter into any parish not immediately under his charge, and there preach and exhort the people, is secluded the benefit of the law for support of the ministry, except such ordained ministers or licensed person shall be expressly invited, and desired so to enter into such other parish, and there to preach and exhort the people, either by the settled minister and major part of the church; or in case there be no settled minister, by the church or society within such parish. And if any Association of ministers should assume the prerogative of another, by way of license, decision or counsel, such Association also to be excluded the benefit of law for supporting ministers.

By the same act it is ordained, that persons who are not settled ministers, who shall publicly preach and exhort without the consent of the settled minister, &c., to be bound to their good and peaceable behavior, and in particular not to offend in the like kind.

And foreigners whether of an ecclesiastical character or not, presuming to teach, preach, or publicly exhort, without consent of the settled ministers, &c. to be sent as vagrants from one constable to another out of the bounds of the colony; and by an *Act* passed in the year 1743, in addition to this, if any such foreigner, who by order of authority hath been transported out of the bounds of the colony, return again and become guilty of the same offence, then such offender to be bound to his good behavior and not to offend again in like manner.

This may justly be esteemed a very severe law: it was made when religious heat and controversy ran high, but however imprudent and disorderly some public and authorised preachers, and others, lay exhorters, were, several things in this act cannot be justified: it doth not appear that it was long in force, and is omitted in the following new edition of the laws, A. D. 1750, or if any thing remains of it in that edition it is found in an act entitled "An act for the due observation and keeping the Sabbath or Lord's day; and for preventing and punishing disorders and profaneness on the same." In this act there is the following paragraph: "That whatsoever persons shall on the Lord's day, under any pretence, assemble themselves together in any of the public meeting

houses, provided in any town, parish or society for the public worship of God, without the leave or allowance of the minister and congregation for whose use it was provided, and be thereof convicted as aforesaid, every such person shall incur the penalty of ten shillings for every such offence." This paragraph may appear reasonable and was designed to prevent public disorder, and is still in force. But that which follows in the next paragraph of the same act hath been esteemed contrary to Christian liberty. "Nor shall any neglect the public worship of God in some lawful congregation, and form themselves into separate companies in private houses, on penalty of ten shillings for every such offence each person shall be guilty of." The injustice and iniquity of imposing upon the rights of conscience do not seem to be fully understood when this law passed. By another paragraph of it, every person who shall be unnecessarily absent from the public worship of God on the Lord's day in some congregation by law allowed, is liable to a fine of three shillings; and by this to assemble elsewhere in a private house exposes to the penalty of ten shillings. However, this severity never hindered such separate companies from meeting either in private houses, or from providing other convenient places; nor does it appear that this law was ever made much use of against them: such companies were for a number of years tolerated nothwithstanding the law, there being no prosecution of it; and thus the matter continued till the year 1770, when the aforesaid paragraph was repealed, and universal liberty of worship established in the following act entitled "An act in addition to a law of this colony, entitled 'An act for the due observation and keeping the Sabbath or Lord's day, and for preventing and punishing disorders and profaneness on the same.'

"Be it enacted by the Governor, Council, and Representatives in General Court assembled and by the authority of the same: That no person in this colony, professing the Christian Protestant religion, who soberly and conscientiously dissent from the worship and ministry established or approved by the laws of this colony, and attend public worship by themselves, shall incur any of the penalties in part mentioned for not attending the worship and ministry so established on the Lord's day, or on account of their meeting together by themselves on said day for the public worship of God in a way agreeable to their consciences; any thing in said act to the contrary notwithstanding."

Since this act of Assembly there is no law in force in this colony for hindering any Protestants of whatever denomination from forming into whatsoever religious societies they please, for worshipping God in a way agreeable to their consciences, without any application to the civil magistrate, and by it in this respect an equal, universal Protestant toleration is granted, while still the approved and established churches continue to enjoy the same privileges as they did before.

### IX. Of the Sabbath, or Lord's Day.

The laws of this colony respecting the observation of the Sabbath, require that all persons carefully apply themselves to the duties of religion, publicly and privately; particularly that they attend public worship in such assembly and manner as are agreeable to their conscience, in which regard every Protestant is at liberty to choose for himself, without being subject to any penalty or restriction whatsoever; and forbid all manner of labor, business, or work on

land or water; also all kind of games, sports, plays or recreations; likewise all travelling or driving of carriages and cattle; meeting together in companies in the streets or elsewhere in the evening before or after, and all rude, profane, and unlawful behavior in word or action, and whatsoever may disturb any assembly of people who are met for public worship. These laws have been numerous, but as at present there seems nothing in them that bears hard upon religious liberty, I content myself with the above summary of them.

### X. Of Ministers and their Support.

The laws of this colony have always supported an approved and established ministry, and made provision in what manner this support shall be obtained. These laws have admitted from time to time of circumstantial variations, but for substance have been the same from the beginning. It will, then, be altogether unnecessary to recite any of the ancient laws of this colony; it will be sufficient to give a summary of the laws now in force respecting this matter, and particularly of an "Act or law of the colony, entitled 'An act for the settlement, support, and encouragement of ministers; and for the well ordering of estates given for the support of the ministry.'"

By this law it is enacted that the inhabitants of any town, or society, or parish, constituted by this Assembly, who are or shall be present at any town or society meeting legally warned, shall have power by the major vote of those so met, to call and settle a minister, or ministers among them, and to provide for his or their support and maintenance.

That the minister or ministers which have been or shall be so called and settled, shall be the minister or ministers of such town or society.

And all agreements which have been or shall be made by the major part of the inhabitants of any town or society, qualified and met as aforesaid with such minister or ministers, respecting his or their settlement and maintenance shall be binding and obligatory on all the inhabitants of such town or society so agreeing, and on their successors, according to the true intents and purposes thereof.

Here it may be observed, that it hath always been a principle in this colony that a people should choose their own minister: and as when the colony was first settled there were no Dissenters from the common and approved method of worship and discipline, it was taken for granted that all who were taught in word or doctrine were bound in equity to give for the support of the Gospel according to their several abilities, by the same rule as they contributed to other necessary expenses.

And as for many years there was no other approved or allowed worship but that of the Congregational and Presbyterian, none were excused from paying to the established worship and ministry; and though in the 7th year of Queen Anne there was an act of toleration for sober qualified Dissenters, yet this did not excuse from paying toward the support of the established churches, nor doth it appear that any such Dissenters asked this favor or privilege till the year 1727, when it was granted the professors of the Church of England by the following act of the General Assembly, entitled "At a General Assembly held at Hartford, May 11, 1727, 'An act providing how the taxes levied on

the professors of the Church of England for the support of the Gospel shall be disposed of, and for exempting said professors from paying any taxes for the building meeting houses for the present established churches of this government.'"

"*Upon the prayer of Moses Ward, of Fairfield, church-warden and the rest of the church-wardens, vestrymen, and brethren, representing themselves under obligation by the Honorable Society and Bishop of London, to pay to the support of the Established Churches; praying this Assembly by some act or otherwise, to free them from paying to dissenting ministers, and from building dissenting meeting houses; and complaining that money hath lately been taken from them by distress, praying that said money might be returned unto them.*

"*Said Ward appeared, and by his attorney declared to this Assembly, that he should not insist on the return of the money prayed for. Asserted it to have been always esteemed an hardship by those of the profession established by this government, to be compelled to contribute to the support of the Church of England where that is the church established by law: and thereupon urged that no such thing should be imposed upon any dissenting from the churches here approved and established by the law of this government: further urging that there might be some provision made by the law for the obliging their parishioners to pay to the support of their ministers.*"

"Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, Council, and Representatives in General Court assembled and by the authority of the same, that all persons who are of the Church of England, and those who are of the churches established by the laws of this government that live in the bounds of any parish allowed by this Assembly, shall be taxed by the parishioners of the said parish by the same rule, and in the same proportion for the support of the ministry in each parish; but if it so happen that there be a society of the Church of England where there is a person in orders according to the canons of the Church of England settled and abiding amongst them, and performing divine service so near to any person that hath declared himself of the Church of England that he can conveniently and doth attend the public worship there, then the collectors having first indifferently levied the tax as abovesaid, shall deliver the taxes collected of such persons declaring themselves and attending as aforesaid, unto the minister of the Church of England living near unto such persons; which minister shall have full power to receive and recover the same in order to his support in the place assigned him.

"But if such proportion of taxes be not sufficient in any society of the Church of England to support the incumbent there, then such society may levy and collect of them who profess and attend as aforesaid, greater taxes at their own discretion, for the support of their minister.

"And the parishioners of the Church of England attending as aforesaid, are hereby excused from paying any taxes for the building meeting houses for the present established churches of this government."

At a General Assembly held at Hartford, May 8th, 1729, the following Act was made, in favor of those who are commonly called Quakers:

"An act in addition to and for the alteration of an act made in the 7th year of the reign of Queen Anne, entitled '*An act for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministry established by the laws of this government.*' *Whereas it is provided in said act, that nothing therein shall be construed to the excusing any person from paying any such minister or town dues, as were then, or afterward should be due from them.*

"It is now resolved and enacted by the Governor, &c., that where there are such Dissenters as are commonly called Quakess, who do attend the worship of God in such way as is allowed by said act within this colony, or are so situated by the borders thereof as that they may and do attend the service out of the limits of this government in any such meeting as aforesaid, and shall produce a certificate from such society of their having joined themselves to them, and that they do belong unto their society, that he or they shall be excused from contributing to the support of the established ministry, and from contributing or paying any tax for the building any meeting house or houses in the society or parish wherein they dwell."

The same year at a General Assembly holden at New Haven, in October, the same favor was granted the people called Baptists, by the following act:—

"An act concerning the people called Baptists."

"*Upon the memorial of the people called Baptists, praying that they may be discharged from the payment of rates and taxes for the support of the Gospel ministry in this government, and building meeting houses.*

"It is resolved, &c. that for the future the same privilege and exemption from the charges aforesaid, as was granted by this Assembly in May last unto the people called Quakers, is hereby granted unto them, under the like regulations, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary otwithstanding."

These are the only exemptions from paying for the support of the established churches, unless on particular application, the General Assembly is pleased, as they sometimes have been to grant special exemptions to some persons expressed by name; all others by virtue of the general establishment are obliged to pay for the support of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Consociated Churches, which may seem to bear hard upon some number, I know not how great, of people commonly called *Separates*, who, though professing themselves *Congregational* in principle, yet for some reasons that to them appear sufficient, have separated from the standing churches, and formed themselves in several towns and parishes, into distinct churches, and worshipping assemblies.

It is thought by some that there is still wanting a general law, whereby all may be exempted from paying to the support of the estalished churches, who conscientiously dissent from their doctrine, discipline, or mode of worship: yet as the matter is now circumstanced, I believe but few towns or societies insist on collecting rates from those who are Separates, though the law enables them to do it. Besides all such may apply to the Assembly for relief, where they may hope to be heard with indulgence, and have any reasonable favor granted them.

Since these laws of exemption were made, the persons so freed from ecclesiastical dues, are not admitted to act in such affairs in town or society meetings, as appears from an act entitled, "An act for forming, ordering, and regulating societies or parishes," in which among other things it is enacted, that no person "who is or shall be by the laws of this government freed or exempted from the payment of those taxes granted by any town or society for the support of the worship and ministry of the Presbyterian, Congregational, or Consociated Churches of this government, and for the building and maintaining meeting houses for such worship on account or by reason of his dissenting from the way of worship and ministry aforesaid, be allowed or admitted to act or vote in any town or society meeting in those votes which respect or relate to the support of the worship and ministry aforesaid, and the building and maintaining the meeting houses aforesaid."

None appear dissatisfied with this law, except some few professors of the Church of England, who represent it as an hardship that they are taxed without liberty of voting, though the tax be for their own benefit, and the regulation of it made upon their desire. I can't think any of the established churches would be averse to an alteration, but would choose to be altogether disconnected; and that they might be enabled to do their own business, without any concern with one another. If I am rightly informed this was proposed in the General Assembly some time past, but was laid aside upon the desire of the Episcopalians, who did not think it would be best for them in their present circumstances. By the law made in their favor and on their desire, whatever tax is collected must be paid their own ministers; and if this be not sufficient, they may tax themselves. Besides as the laws now stand, their ministers seem to think they are entitled to the rates of people, who live perhaps at forty miles distance, if they visit and preach to them once or twice a year, and baptize their children; and as may be feared sometimes beguile them with promises of discharging their rates if they become Churchmen. These things have occasioned trouble and law-suits in some places which might be prevented by an alteration of the law.

There is nothing farther needs to be added on this head, except that I do not find that there is any special office, power, or privilege of a civil or temporal nature granted to ministers but that of being exempted from taxes for themselves and estates lying in their own town and parish, which I take to be extended to all ministers, who are allowad by law, and not peculiar to those of the established churches. On the other hand, I do not find that by any law ministers are disqualified to hold civil offices; and yet such is the general persuasion both of ministers and people, that ministers should mind their own business,—that there have been but few instances of ministers during their ministry acting in any civil office or capacity, except merely that of freemen of the Company since the first settlement of the country: and when ministers have been chosen to some other weighty trust, into which they appeared to be called in Providence, they have usually resigned their ministry, as not consistent with civil employments: the only thing they are authorized to do by the laws of the colony in common with the civil magistrate, is to join persons in

marriage in their own town and parish; and even this was not allowed them at first, but assigned altogether to the magistrate as his proper work. As to marriage-licenses there is no such thing allowed by law, but it is required that the intentions of marriage shall always be published in due form, before any magistrate or minister join persons in marriage. As to the spiritual discipline of the Gospel, ministers and churches of every denomination are allowed freely to follow their own way, but their determinations do not affect any in their civil interest, offices and character, by force of any law, nor otherwise than as church censures may, in the reason and nature of the thing, have an influence in fixing a man's character, and may consequentially affect him in regard to his temporal interests, while yet he is put under no legal disability of any kind by such censures. But though there be no law enforcing ecclesiastical censures with any civil penalties or forfeitures, yet such hath been and still is the general regard to the public profession of religion and virtue, that if it be known that any persons are scandalously guilty of breaking the rules of either, such persons without some visible reformation and amendment, stand but little chance for those offices, which are in the gift of the people by election, or are filled up by appointment of the General Assembly.

And as to those matters which are cognizable by the spiritual courts in *England*, ministers have no concern in this *Colony*. Whatever relates to marriage, divorce, incest, scandal, matters testamentary, &c., is altogether determined in the common courts of law, or such other courts as the General Assembly have ordained, as is the case in matters testamentary, for which a peculiar court called *the Court of Probate* is appointed. As the civil magistrate meddles not with matters of discipline, so neither are ministers allowed to meddle with civil and temporal matters. These seem too much blended in the ecclesiastical courts in England, but are here perfectly distinct. There the spiritual court is supreme and uncontrolled in matters of discipline, and in finally and absolutely determining on cases of excommunication, sovereignly directing who shall be received to or cast out from the Christian fellowship, as well as authorized in those matters aforesaid which are purely temporal: but here as churches are left at free liberty to exercise their own spiritual discipline; so effectual provision is made for the determination of those other cases which come within the jurisdiction of the magistrate.

I have now done with those laws, a view of which seemed necessary in order to a just knowledge of the present state of religious liberty in this colony, and the progress this liberty hath made from the original settlement unto the present day. The design of our fathers in the first settlement of this country was noble, and they went through amazing difficulties in the accomplishment of it. The grand inducement was religion, and liberty of worshipping God in a way agreeable to their consciences; and though they were not fully acquainted with the just extent of religious freedom, yet they adopted such principles and such an ecclesiastical polity as naturally led on to it. They were immoveably fixed in the only sufficient rule by which the whole of religion is to be determined, that is the Holy Scriptures; that Christ Jesus is the only Lawgiver and King in his church; and that no man, no body of men upon

earth have any authority to make laws, or prescribe things in religion to bind the conscience, and that every man should be careful to know the mind of Christ, that his faith might rest on a divine foundation; and finally, this is the grand, the only principle on which the unity, the purity and peace of the Christian church can subsist: and if, notwithstanding these principles, liberty in matters of religion hath been under any embarrassments, as most certainly it hath, this proceeded not from the nature of these principles, or of our ecclesiastical polity, which bears a friendly aspect on public, civil, and religious freedom, but from the spirit of those times, which hath greatly altered. It is certain that for a considerable time there was too much of a coercive uniformity in the laws of the colony; but this by degrees disappears, and an equal, universal, Protestant liberty is established in its room.

On the whole, by this view of our ecclesiastical and religious laws, we find how the cause of liberty hath gained ground in this colony. Those laws which were inconsistent with freedom of thought and liberty of conscience are either wholly repealed and set aside, or so moddelled that none can be oppressed by them. We have indeed a *Religious Establishment*, but it is of such a kind, and with such universal toleration, that the consciences of other sects cannot be affected or wounded by it, while every one is at perfect liberty to worship God in such way as is most agreeable to his own mind. Whatever oppressive measures have been heretofore adopted, we recollect with regret and disapprobation. We rejoice that these have ceased, and that there is such freedom of religious inquiry and worship, that no man need be in bondage. We desire not the aid of other sects to maintain our churches; and while we stand fast to the Constitution we have chosen, and think it in doctrine and discipline most agreeable to the Scripture, the unerring standard of faith and worship, we would not oppress others, nor be oppressed ourselves, but exercise good will and charity to our brethren of other denominations, with fervent prayers that peace and holiness, liberty, truth, and purity may be established more and more among those that name the name of Christ, and be universally diffused among mankind.

*An Account of the number of Inhabitants in the Colony of Connecticut, Jan. 1, 1774; and an Estimate of the Proportion of Episcopalians to Non-Episcopalians in the same.*

County of Hartford.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bolton, | | 994 | 994 |
| Chatham, | 80 | 2289 | 2369 |
| East Haddam, | 88 | 2655 | 2743 |
| Enfield, | | 1353 | 1353 |
| Farmington, | 244 | 5719 | 5963 |
| Glastenbury, | | 1992 | 1992 |
| Haddam, | 23 | 1690 | 1713 |
| Hartford, | 111 | 4770 | 4881 |
| Simsbury, | 914 | 2757 | 3671 |
| Somers, | | 1024 | 1024 |
| Suffield, | | 1980 | 1980 |
| Tolland, | 5 | 1242 | 1247 |
| Wethersfield, | 6 | 3341 | 3347 |
| Willington, | | 1000 | 1000 |
| Colchester, | | | 3057 |
| East Windsor, | | | 2961 |
| Hebron, | | | 2285 |
| Middletown, | | | 4680 |
| Stafford, | | | 1333 |
| Windsor, | | | 2082 |
| 1 to 22. Total, | 1471 | 32806 | 50675 |

County of New Haven.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| New Haven, | 942 | 7080 | 8022 |
| Branford, | 86 | 1852 | 1938 |
| Derby, | 725 | 1094 | 1819 |
| Durham, | 6 | 1025 | 1031 |
| Guilford, | 213 | 2633 | 2846 |
| Milford, | 153 | 1812 | 1965 |
| Wallingford, | 626 | 4151 | 4777 |
| Waterbury, | | | 3498 |
| 1 to 7. Total, | 2751 | 19647 | 25896 |

County of New London.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preston, | 221 | 2034 | 2255 |
| Groton, | 222 | 3266 | 3488 |
| Killingworth, | 68 | 1889 | 1957 |
| Stonington, | 32 | 4924 | 4956 |
| Saybrook, | 33 | 2595 | 2628 |
| New London, | | | 5366 |
| Norwich, | | | 7032 |
| Lyme, | | | 3860 |
| 1 to 25. Total, | 596 | 14708 | 31542 |

County of Fairfield.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Danbury, | 420 | 2053 | 2473 |
| Greenwich, | 443 | 2211 | 2654 |
| New Fairfield, | 87 | 1201 | 1288 |
| Newtown, | 1084 | 1084 | 2168 |
| Norwalk, | 792 | 3451 | 4243 |
| Redding, | 478 | 711 | 1189 |
| Ridgefield, | 329 | 1344 | 1673 |
| Stamford, | 710 | 2793 | 3503 |
| Fairfield, | | | 4544 |
| Stratford, | | | 5201 |
| 10 to 34. Total, | 4343 | 14848 | 28936 |

County of Windham.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coventry, | 11 | 2021 | 2032 |
| Pomfret, | 55 | 2186 | 2241 |
| Killingly, | 30 | 3409 | 3439 |
| Lebanon, | 36 | 3805 | 3841 |
| Mansfield, | 12 | 2431 | 2443 |
| Plainfield, | | 1479 | 1479 |
| Voluntown, | 6 | 1470 | 1476 |
| Union, | | 512 | 512 |
| Canterbury, | | | 2392 |
| Ashford, | | | 2228 |
| Windham, | | | 3437 |
| Woodstock, | | | 1974 |
| 1 to 115. Total, | 150 | 17313 | 27494 |

County of Litchfield.

| *Towns.* | *Epis.* | *Non-Ep.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Litchfield, | 191 | 1318 | 1509 |
| Canaan, | 91 | 1482 | 1573 |
| Cornwall, | 53 | 904 | 957 |
| Hartland, | 49 | 451 | 500 |
| New Hartford, | 25 | 960 | 985 |
| Norfolk, | 38 | 928 | 966 |
| Salisbury, | 91 | 1845 | 1936 |
| Sharon, | 83 | 1903 | 1986 |
| Torrington, | 31 | 812 | 843 |
| Barkhamsted, | | | 250 |
| Colebrook, | | | 150 |
| Goshen, | | | 1098 |
| Harwinton, | | | 1015 |
| Kent, | | | 1922 |
| New Milford, | | | 2742 |
| Westmoreland, | | | 1922 |
| Winchester, | | | 327 |
| Woodbury, | | | 5224 |
| 1 to 16. Total, | 655 | 10600 | 25944 |

As far as the accounts have been sent, the estimate of Episcopalians, &c., stands thus :—

| *Counties.* | *Episcopal.* | *Non-Epis.* | *Total.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hartford County, | 1471 | 32806 | 50675 |
| New Haven do. | 2751 | 19647 | 25896 |
| New London do. | 596 | 14708 | 31542 |
| Fairfield do. | 4343 | 14848 | 28936 |
| Windham do. | 150 | 17313 | 27494 |
| Litchfield do. | 655 | 10542 | 25944 |
| TOTAL, | 9966 | 119922 | 190487 |

which gives 1 Episcopalian to 12 Non-Episcopalians nearly, or makes the Episcopalians about 1 in 13 of the whole number of inhabitants ; and probably there would be no great difference from this proportion were the account of all the towns come in, which I hope soon to gain.

ELIZUR GOODRICH.

Durham, Sept. 5, A. D. 1774.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

Were all the extracts, presented to the Convention, now possessed and spread out before the reader, we should probably find a more intolerant spirit in some of the colonies than existed in Connecticut. For no inconsiderable time after the colonies were settled the principles of civil liberty were little understood.—Concerning the treatment of Roger Williams in Massachusetts, very different opinions may be formed. The facts pertaining to that most singular man are better sketched by the Hon. J. Q. Adams, in his Address before the Historical Society of Massachusetts in May last, on the second Centennial Celebration of the New England Colonies, than by many who have spoken of his character. If he had a *conscientious spirit*, it is certain he indulged, for a time, in a very *contentious one.*

Passing his case ; by the laws of Virginia, where Episcopacy was established, ministers from New England, who had upon the invitation of pious people gone thither to labor in 1642, and were recommended by the Governor of Massachusetts to the Governor and Council of that province, were obliged to depart, and they returned the next year. They formed a church, which in 1648 embraced 118 members. But its enlargement afforded no security. Its elder, Mr. Durand, was first banished, and afterwards its pastor, Mr. Harrison, was obliged to depart.—*Holmes' Annals*, vol. 1, pp. 264, 271, 239.

More than eighty years afterwards, under the administration of Lord Cornbury, Governor of New York and New Jersey, two Presbyterian clergymen, Rev. James Makemie and Rev. John Hampton, were imprisoned for preaching in his government ; and the former was subjected to a trial, though acquitted by a jury.—Narrative of a new and unusual Imprisonment of two Presbyterian Ministers, &c., appended to Dr. Hill's American Presbyterianism.

The offensive law passed in Connecticut in 1742, was designed to stop the disorders which followed particularly the career of the Rev. James Davenport. It would be difficult at this time to form adequate conceptions of those evils. Some idea may be gathered from the Retractations of Davenport himself.—See Retractations in Rev. Joseph Fish's Sermons, pp. 125—127. Dr. Trumbull in the second volume of his History of Connecticut censures that law in very strong language; and he ascribes its passage and character very much to the doings of a Consociation called by the Legislature in the close of the preceding year, which are referred to in the preamble to the act, though he had never seen the Minutes of that body. Since his death the Minutes have been found, and it is clear, whatever respect the Legislature paid to the doings of that body, that their law went beyond them.—See Appendix to the Sermon of Rev. Thomas Robbins, (now Dr. Robbins) at the Installation of Rev. Enoch Burt, at Manchester, Ct., July 1, 1824, to which the Minutes are appended.

As to the controversy about an American Episcopate before the Revolutionary War—the late Bishop White in his Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, expresses the belief that it was impossible (then) to have obtained the concurrence of a respectable number of laymen in any measure for the obtaining an American Episcopate. He admits, also, the comparatively small number of Episcopalians in the colonies, pp. 17, 18, 69.

The apprehension that an Episcopal hierarchy might be established in the colonies was one cause of the American Revolution. To this fact the elder President Adams testifies—"Where is the man to be found," says he, "at this day, when we see Methodistical Bishops, Bishops of the Church of England, and Bishops, Archbishops, and Jesuits of the Church of Rome with indifference, who will believe, that the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed, fifty years ago, (1815) as much as any other cause, to arouse the attention, not only of the inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of Parliament over the colonies? This, nevertheless, was a fact as certain as any in the history of North America.

"The objection was not merely to the office of a Bishop, though even that was dreaded, as to the authority of Parliament, on which it must be founded. The reasoning was this:—The Archbishops and Bishops in England can neither locate and limit dioceses in America, nor ordain Bishops in any part of the dominions of Great Britain, out of the realm, by any law of the kingdom, or of any of the colonies, nor by any canon law acknowledged by either. The King cannot grant his *conge d'elire* to any people out of his realm. There is no power, or pretended power, less than Parliament, that can create Bishops in America. But if Parliament can erect dioceses and appoint Bishops, they may introduce the whole hierarchy, establish tithes, forbid marriages and funerals, establish religion, forbid dissenters, make schism heresy, impose penalties extending to life and limb, as well as to liberty and property," &c.—See Dr. Morse's Annals of the American Revolution, pp. 197—203.

# MISSING LETTERS.

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The Letters mentioned as missing, pp. 27, 28, and 36, have come to hand just in season to be added here.

*Letter from the Committee of Dissenters in London.*

[Page 27.]

"Rev. Sir,—

"The favor of your letter, signed as Register, in the name and by order of the Reverend General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at New Haven, 14th September, 1769, did not come to the hands of Jasper Mauduit, Esq. (Chairman of the Committee for managing the civil affairs of the Dissenters) for upwards of nine months, and he having summoned a meeting of the said Committee, they took your letter into consideration, and have desired me (who have the honor of being their Secretary) to acquaint you that the Committee is fully sensible of the many civil and religious inconveniences that would arise from the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America; and therefore beg leave to assure you of their most vigilant attention to oppose and frustrate any such design; at the same time they have the pleasure of informing you that they have made the strictest inquiries, and are able from the very best authorities to assure you that there is no such design on foot, at present; and that they hope government are so sensible of the confusion such a step would make among our American brethren, that however warmly some of our Bishops may wish for it, and express their desires in their sermons on public occasions, yet the Committee verily believe they will never be able to accomplish them. But that however as you and they are engaged in one common cause, the defence of civil and religious liberty, you may depend upon it, that if any attempts are made to revive this design, the Committee will carefully watch and exert their utmost endeavors to prevent the carrying it into execution.

"I am, Sir, further directed by the Committee to acquaint you that they shall be very ready and willing to continue a correspondence with you, and from time to time to transmit to you the earliest intelligence they can get relative to this matter. And if hereafter you have occasion to communicate any thing to them, you will please to direct your letters to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., in Hackney near London, or to Mr. Thomas Cotton, Attorney at Law, in Hackney.

"Signed in the name and by the order of the said Committee,

"Thomas Cotton, Secretary.

"4th August, 1770.

"I have sent letters of the same tenor and date to the Rev. Dr. Allison and Mr. Whitman."

*Letter of the Convention to the Committee of Dissenters.*

[Page 28.]

"Sir,—

"Your favors of the 4th of August, 1770, in answer to ours of the 14th Sept. 1769, came safe to the hands of Dr. Allison and Dr. Rodgers, and were laid before the General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. It gives us particular satisfaction to find you embarked in the same cause with us, and that you are so sensible of the many inconveniences that would attend the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America as to engage your most vigilant attention to oppose and frustrate such a design. It is no less pleasing to us to be assured from so good authority that such a scheme is laid aside for the present. Yet we have sufficient reason to believe that the measure is so desirable to the Bishops in England and the Episcopal clergy with us that they will lose no opportunity of carrying it into execution, and therefore will privately as well as publicly countenance every measure and improve every advantage that has even a remote and distant tendency to subjugate the colonies to Episcopal domination, as this will easily pave the way for the destruction of our civil liberties. We have but too much reason to know that Diocesan Bishops with their inferior clergy, have always been the tools of arbitrary power, and ready to fall in with and promote the views of a minister of state, however detrimental they may be to other denominations of Christians. In this point of light we view the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in procuring grants of land vested in them for the purpose of supporting the Episcopal clergy in the townships laid out in New Hampshire of late years, although few or no Episcopalians reside in them, and in granting considerable salaries to missionaries in the most populous parts of our colonies, even where there are faithful ministers of other denominations settled and but a few families of their religious persuasion, while at the same time they are neglecting to supply great numbers of their clergy not only in Scotland but even in England. The reason is plain; the form of church government is fixed in those places, but here they have hopes by their bounties to be able to form and fix the government to their own minds, and in time subject us to Episcopal jurisdiction. Their partiality also appears very flagrant in neglecting to send missionaries among the poor benighted Indians on our borders, although their money was partly designed for their relief, and the many distressed inhabitants on our frontiers who are perishing for want of knowledge, having few to break the bread of life among them. The peculiar care of the Episcopalians among ourselves where they have any influence, to fill all the places of power and trust in our various governments with those of their own denomination, or at least those who are in their interest, seems to us evidently calculated to promote their grand design, and therefore fills us with uneasy apprehensions. Upon the whole, these considerations make it evident to us that their views are not so much to promote Christianity as the establishment of

Episcopal church government in the colonies, and therefore engage our constant watchfulness lest they should take the advantage of our being off our guard to accomplish a design, which, however pleasing to them, will be attended with the most lamentable consequences to the interests of true religion and liberty among us.

"As we shall always look upon ourselves greatly obliged by your continued correspondence, please to direct any intelligence or advice you may think proper to transmit to us, to the Rev. Dr. Allison in Philadelphia, Dr. John Rodgers in New York, and Mr. Whitman in Hartford, Connecticut.

"Signed by order of the General Convention,

"NATHANIEL TAYLOR, Chairman.

"Elizabethtown, October 3d, 1770.

"P. S. We also herewith send you an account of only one instance of Episcopal oppression in the colony of Georgia, which may show what we are to expect in case their wished for plan should be carried into execution, and that Mr. Zubly whose congregation has been thus treated, is a gentleman of an established reputation for learning, prudence, and piety. See Appendix No. 2."

[This record has not been found in the Appendix of the Minutes.]

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*Letter of the Deputation of Dissenters in London, to the Convention.*

[Page 36.]

"REV. SIR,—

"Your favor to our Secretary, Mr. Cotton, dated October 10th last, he produced and read to our Committee who referred to us to give an answer thereto. We beg you will depend upon it that the Committee will ever carefully watch against any attempts that may be made to introduce Diocesan Bishops into America. We are sensible indeed the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Episcopal clergy are very desirous of it, but at the same time, are fully persuaded that administration have no such intention at present, and that no steps relating thereto have been taken by them since our last. If any petition for that purpose should be agitated in your or in any other of the colonies, we desire you will endeavor to counterwork it, and if such a one should come over here, the Committee will be sure to oppose it.

"With regard to the affair you desired our thoughts of, as to your having an agent here, it is the opinion of the Committee that a proper person qualified to be your agent in the manner specified in your letter, would be very difficult to be found; and if such a one could be found would not answer your end, as he would not have the weight with administration as this Committee would; for

whatever he might at any time say, they would look upon him as an agent for the colonies and under their influence, whereas no such bias could be imputed to this Committee.

"We hope you will rest assured that we will always exert ourselves for your benefit, in defence of your religious liberties :

"And are, Rev. Sir,

"Your most humble servants,

| | |
|---|---|
| "Richard Cooke, | "Jasper Mauduit, |
| "Robert Lewin, | "Wm. Bowden, |
| "Edward Hunt, | "Thomas Lucas. |
| "Jas. Bay French, | |

"The Rev. Dr. Allison.

"January 22, 1771."

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